



FROM THE SHELF

THE



REALITIES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

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An Interpretation of Christian Experience

BY

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TO
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PREFACE

THEOLOGICAL discussion is confronted by manifold difficulties. One person comes to it for metaphysics, another for history or tradition, a third for the working over of the Scriptures, while still another is satisfied only when he finds his own views exactly reproduced. On the one hand, we are advised that the time is ripe for a reconstruction of theology, and are treated to fruitful suggestions along this line; on the other hand, we are warned that a reconstruction of theology is hopeless, since, without an accepted cosmology or metaphysics, it provides no material for the system builder. On one subject, however, there is universal agreement: whatever the differences of past or present explanations of Christian belief, the Christian experience of to-day is essentially the same that it has been from the beginning. It cannot, therefore, be wholly in vain to attempt a fresh interpretation of Christian experience in terms of modern intelligence.

With this conviction, the present work has been undertaken. The Scriptures have been used, so far as they present the highest type of Christian experience and provide material for its realization. The great confessions and the chief theologians of the church have been consulted with a constructive — but never with a controversial — aim. Unqualified reliance has been placed upon psychology as revealing the laws of consciousness, upon ethics as disclosing the ideal to be realized in personality, and upon evolution as the

constant method of the divine action in nature and human historical life. Nor has the aid of metaphysics been declined wherever it has promised assistance. The purpose has been to consider the realities of Christian faith so far as these are made known in and through Christian experience. Accordingly many subjects commonly included in treatises on theology are here omitted, on account of their remoteness or irrelevancy to the end in view. The result is neither a compendium nor a text-book of theology, but rather a presentation of the contents of faith as limited and at the same time illumined by Christian experience.

Modesty, reserve, understatement, are perhaps the moral qualities most needed in such a task. If the insight is not clear, the judgment sane, the sympathy true, the spirit Christian, this will be regretted by no one more than by myself. On every subject I have written with unrestrained candor. I have not hidden from myself, nor would I conceal from my readers, the conflict between the scientific and the religious interests connected with faith. I believe, however, that a reconciliation of these interests, although postponed, is not to be despaired of, and that when it comes to pass, it will be effected not by suppression of one at the expense of the other, but by discovery of the principle in which both interests shall be regarded not as antagonistic, but as completing aspects of man's relation to reality. Meanwhile, to each interest — the religious and the scientific — must be accorded the worth which belongs to it in its own right. In addition, one may be well content not to have spoken the last word, but to hand on many an unsolved problem to others, that they also may share the pleasure which he has felt in pursuing questions through their inviting mazes

until they disclosed a part at least of their secret to his patient search.

The traditional order of topics is mainly followed, partly for convenience, and partly because to one who travels through a country it is of less importance by what route he goes than what he sees on the way and what he brings back with him for further study in reflective hours. The subjects which are usually discussed under the Person of Christ and the Atonement, and under Regeneration, Conversion, and Sanctification, are treated here under two reciprocal titles, the Identification of Christ with Men, and the Identification of Men with Christ. The consideration of the Trinity has been reserved for the last, in order to take the doctrine out of the field of dogma and to let it be seen to be — what it is — the final explanation of the contents of faith. Thus God is the beginning and the end of our thought.

References and quotations are comparatively few. It would be impossible to enumerate those to whom I am indebted — teachers, writers, pupils, personal friends. I may, however, be permitted to single out two for grateful mention: my pastor, the Reverend Charles Herrick Cutler, D. D., of the First Parish Church, Bangor, Maine, and Mrs. Louise Benson Sewall, the wife of a former colleague in Bangor Theological Seminary, whose appreciation and encouragement helped me over many hard places; — the latter, alas! no longer in the earthly life. Would that these pages might reflect a light from her who now “sees with larger other eyes than ours.”

C. A. B.

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We know in part, and we prophesy in part. — PAUL.

God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. — JOHN.

In order to know the way which leads to God and to take it with certainty, we have no need of foreign aid, but of ourselves alone. As God is above all, the way which leads to him is neither distant, nor outside of us, nor difficult to find. The kingdom of God is within us. . . . If any one asks of me, What is the way? I answer, that it is the soul of each and the intelligence which it encloses. — ATHANASIUS.

God is more truly thought than he is uttered, and exists more truly than he is thought. — AUGUSTINE.

Cold and frivolous are the speculations of those who employ themselves in disquisitions on the essence of God, when it would be more interesting to us to become acquainted with his character, and to know what is agreeable to his nature. — CALVIN.

If we are ever to have any sufficient or tolerably comprehensive theology, it can never be matured, save through the medium of an esthetic elevation of the sensibilities of our souls, which only the closest possible union of the life to God can produce. Our ripe comprehensive theology, when we find it, will be convoluted with spirit, and so mixed with faith, that it will be as much a life, a holy breath and catholicity of spirit, as a theory. — BUSHNELL.

The principles on which I have taught: First. The establishment of positive truth, instead of the negative destruction of error. Secondly. That truth is made up of two opposite propositions, and not found in a *via media* between them. Thirdly. That spiritual truth is discerned by the spirit, instead of intellectually in propositions; and therefore Truth should be taught suggestively, not dogmatically. Fourthly. That belief in the Human character of Christ's Humanity must be antecedent to belief in his Divine origin. Fifthly. That Christianity, as its teachers should, works from the inward to the outward, and not *vice versa*. Sixthly. The soul of goodness in things evil. — ROBERTSON.

REALITIES OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

I

INTRODUCTION : TOUCHSTONES OF PRESENT DAY THEOLOGY

THE Christian man who seeks for himself a rational interpretation of his faith has at the outset to come to a definite understanding with several distinctively modern questions. He will, for instance, have to settle whether he will adopt the scientific or the traditional deductive method, or by a convenient combination of these provide a temporary basis for his investigation. The time was, and that too not so very long ago, when from a few cardinal points assumed the whole field of theology was staked out. But this condition has forever passed away. The sciences have one by one yielded to the inductive method. And it is hard to see why, if this method rules absolutely in every other department of human investigation, it should not have the same supremacy in theology — sometimes called the “queen of the sciences.” Laws of evidence, canons of criticism, principles of interpretation, have the same validity with reference to Christianity that they have elsewhere. In this respect Christian theology has undergone a profound change, but it still withholds a part of the price unless it surrenders itself

completely to the spirit which maintains that the great business of the human mind is first to ascertain facts, and then to seek an interpretation of them which, instead of doing violence, shall be the unforced expression of their inner meaning according to necessary laws of thought.

One has also to take a definite position concerning the relation of history to the materials of belief. The historical background of Christianity is to us something different from what it was to those with whom traditional theology originated; the presuppositions, the criteria, the perspective, the facts themselves, and the interpretation of the facts are different. One has to reach a judgment concerning these as accurately and surely as possible, so far as faith is concerned. In response to a legitimate demand, the historical spirit has established for itself an undisputed place, not only on both sides of the New Testament, but even in the New Testament itself. To this bar of judgment comes without exception the account of every event which has to do with Christianity. On the one hand, in the light of the reconstruction of the Old Testament history, the interpretation of the New Testament is undergoing far-reaching modification. On the other hand, the modern study of the four centuries following 100 A. D. enables us to separate the permanent from the transient in the great symbols of that period. Nor does the historical spirit rest here; on the contrary, it subjects the documents of the New Testament, and indeed the entire Apostolic age, to a searching scrutiny, which has already set in truer light many Christian facts and made possible a more rational interpretation of Christian doctrine.

One has, moreover, to make up his mind as to the nature and principle of authority. Reduced to its lowest terms, this is conceivably of only two kinds — external and internal. It is external when it comes as an arbitrary or coercing power. Thus there is the authority of the Scriptures, or that of tradition as presented in the creeds, customs, and institutions of the church. But the principle of external authority no longer rules from its ancestral throne. Systems of religious beliefs, venerable by reason of age and the support of great names, and long guarded from profaning hands, are now subjected to fresh and unsparing criticism. No appeal can be finally ratified by the will that fails to pass muster in the intelligence. Even “supernatural revelation” can contain nothing which is permanently repugnant to human rationality, and no body of privileged men can ever form a class by themselves so as to hand down to their fellow-men truths inaccessible to human experience. The ultimate moral authority binding on the Christian man is that, and that only, which has its seat within his own consciousness. Without qualification and without reserve the Apostle states the principle: “He that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man.”

With reference to the use that is to be made of metaphysics in theology, two opposite positions have been advocated. According to one, metaphysics is claimed to be valid, whereas, according to the other, in the revelation itself as interpreted through Christian experience is all the material necessary for theology. The latter is a modern and to some extent a revolutionary conception. It has been proposed from two

very different points of view. Horace Bushnell, for instance, defended the exclusion of metaphysics from theological discussion on the ground that all truth of whatever kind is presented to the mind through symbols, and symbols are not, and cannot be, a perfect or even adequate expression of the reality. There is always a lurking danger that the theologian will mistake the symbol for the reality. His safety lies in remembering that with whatever of accuracy he frames his definition, and however he seems to have reached a finality of statement, he is never able to speak the last word ; with the advance of human experience, the reality he conceives of will be expressed in other and yet worthier symbols.

The other ground on which metaphysics has been discredited in theology is that proposed by Ritschl and his school. After allowing for many shades of minor difference among those who adhere to this position, a general agreement characterizes the steps by which it is reached. First, negatively, according to the philosophy of Kant, the ultimate reality is inaccessible to thought ; the phenomenal world is alone open to intelligence. Any affirmations in theology, therefore, dealing with the inner nature of God or with reality behind phenomena, since these are the product of speculative thought, are to be set aside. Positively, following Schleiermacher, Christian experience contains all the material available or even necessary for theological inquiry. This principle of the Ritschlian school, setting in the centre of every interpretation of truth a living experience of the love of God in Christ, is of the greatest service in theology. But the reason no less than the feelings has its rights. And no unten-

able theory of the limits of human knowledge should preclude it from exercising its proper function. The theologian of all men must hold that God's world from lowest to highest is one, and the activity of God within it is one, and that light from any source, from the natural world and from reason, promising a wider interpretation of the divine gracious will, is to be welcomed.

The value of psychology in our discussion is many-sided. In tracing the development of religious beliefs, for instance, it is to be remembered that these have all had a psychological history. They have taken their rise in consciousness and followed a genetic order. Certain ideas cannot come up until others have prepared the way. As experience develops in this organic process, it gives occasion for an ever wider rational interpretation. But experience becomes progressively spiritualized, with higher values emerging in the translation of it into rational forms; yet always in accord with the law: "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual." No study is more fascinating, as, indeed, none is more rewarding, than to trace the psychological history of the belief in God, the conception of sacrifice, the notion of sin, and the doctrine of a future life. In such a study one discovers how all of these began low down, in forms scarcely recognizable if tested in the light of later unfolding; yet even so, they contained in themselves the promise of an endless development in consciousness. But it is plain that one cannot in the construction of doctrine appeal with the same confidence to the earlier as to the latest phases of these beliefs.

This psychological history of beliefs, showing how they were unfolded in consciousness, not seldom contains the vindication or refutation of them. If we only know how men came to think in a certain way, we can at the same time often understand what is real and what is illusory in their thought; for example, polytheism as it has developed into monotheism; the sacrifices of beasts and offerings of fruits giving place to self-dedication of the pure will to God and to the welfare of men; belief in a continued life after death in the under-world gradually transformed into the spiritual hope of an eternally expanding fullness of life in God. These and many other ideas, once we have ascertained the conditions under which the consciousness had to act in conceiving of them, become immediately more intelligible and more easily judged. Every human consciousness is in part the product of its time. In a given individual it may command a wider horizon or furnish a deeper interpretation of reality, but the outlook and the reality are still bound to the horizon of the present and must be in forms familiar to the time. It will be necessary for us, therefore, in dealing with the religious beliefs and teachings of any period, to separate the mistaken element or the transient aspect from the enduring reality of which it is the changing expression. And even if one notion of a sacred writer is true, this furnishes no reason for an unquestioning acceptance of all his teaching, nor, granted that the idea is true, is the form in which it is clothed a necessary and permanent and hence an exclusively valid mode of presenting it.

Moreover, all ideas, so far as they are the product of individual consciousness, have an organic relation

to each other. When, for instance, God was conceived of as elevated above the world, dwelling in isolated glory, then providence had to be thought of as an arbitrary divine direction of the world and of human affairs; sin was the violation of a law imposed from without; the atonement a plan whereby the anger of an offended Deity, satisfied by the offering of something other than the person of the evil-doer, was able to pardon the wrong and become favorable to the transgressor; while heaven and hell were places far removed from the earth — the one in the presence of God, the other utterly destitute of that presence. This in rough outline shows how one religious idea in consciousness tends to organize others, and even the whole circle of reflective notions, in harmony with its ruling principle. The result thus indicated is never indeed completed in any one personal consciousness or any one generation. And even if it ever seems on the point of completion, other ideas enter as competing centres of development, so that perfect and final unity is never attained. He, therefore, who will go back to any period of religious thought, even that of Apostolic time, will have to reckon with this law, when he is tempted to adduce the teaching of the New Testament as valid in the construction of a theological system, without having first subjected it to a critical inquiry from a psychological point of view.

It is a further excellence of psychology that through it alone we come to an understanding of the human conditions and limitations of revelation. We are thus put in the way of forming a true notion of that action of the mind through which revelation is realized: it is a condition not limited to the act of writing, but

sustains an organic relation to the entire conscious life; it is no work of God in which the person, however active, is unconscious of the bearing of the idea which he announces. That one may indeed proclaim a truth or interpret a situation in terms which are susceptible of a far wider, even a future, unfolding is to be affirmed. All insight that goes to the heart of a truth or to the inmost impulse of a movement will express more than it is aware of, just as the idealism of a Plato or the politics of an Aristotle contains implications of which these men were unconscious. It may be said of all highest human thought as well as of founders of states, —

“They builded better than they knew.”

But this does not mean that they did not know what they were about. However the implications of their teaching transcended the limitations of their individual consciousness, still it was their distinctive glory that they more truly than their contemporaries discerned “the signs of the times.” And whatever the degree of their intuition or intelligence, it was the same in kind with all knowledge.

Accordingly, revelation is not given *en bloc*, something mysterious and unknown to the recipient, by him to be handed on to others without its having first become an organic part of his own consciousness, as unintelligible to them as to himself; it is rather the disclosure of “something which can be construed by the mind, which is conveyed to it in terms of human thought, which can be expressed in coherent propositions.”¹ As this disclosure of God emerges in the

¹ Caird, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 75, ed. 1881.

human consciousness, it follows the same laws that condition all spiritual intelligence. In judging of it, therefore, from the human side, no exclusive claim can be set up for it, on the ground that it has come in a way absolutely different from that in which, outside of Israel, the highest rational and spiritual knowledge arose. It must be subjected to the same psychological tests that are applied to the other products of consciousness. Thus, in estimating the revelation through prophet, psalmist, law-giver, apostles, and even Jesus himself, the psychological method must be constantly employed, as far as applicable, as a decisive test.

It is a further virtue of psychology that in it alone do we find the laws according to which the moral personality, whether individual or social, comes to self-realization. The doctrine of sin has, for example, been defined not by means of an interpretation of the consciousness, but by reference to the character, the will, the decrees, of God. This procedure would have had far less serious results, had the doctrine of God been more nearly true. In any case, the method is a mistaken one. In man's consciousness, and in this alone, is found all the material necessary for a doctrine of his moral and spiritual constitution, of his sin and the consequences of it.

In a similar manner the doctrine of conversion and the entire appropriation of salvation must be interpreted in the light of psychology. The new psychological study of conversion is doing more to reveal its true nature than all other inquiries combined. The same method applied to comparative religious experience is yielding an unexpectedly rich harvest. Religious experience has been too commonly conceived of as if it were

wholly a divine work, mysterious, even miraculous, waiting on the will of God, of which that will was the alone efficient agent. To say nothing of the biblical presentation to the contrary, the inalienable consciousness of obligation which implies capacity of choice, and the actual experience of every one who enters upon the new life, provides the key to the meaning of "the change of heart." The number of adolescent conversions discloses a uniformity of experience which can be accounted for only on the basis of a law of consciousness. So-called revivals of religion are also subject to uniformities of action which, if not consciously formulated by revivalists, yet are well known to them. Quiet conversions have their antecedent conditions in trains of thought and feeling leading up to the great turning of choice Godward. Indeed, any theory of regeneration which is purely theological, elaborated with whatever of argumentative skill, and however buttressed with Scripture texts, will stand only so far as its material is psychologically defensible. The principle of the development of the new life is to be interpreted in the same way.

In respect to the person of Christ, unless one is content to pursue a purely biblical inquiry, collating texts and arranging them in a given order, or to adopt without fresh investigation the dogmatic positions of the church, no other course is open, nor does any promise so rich results in our day as that suggested above. The consciousness of Jesus must be studied in the light of the most assured findings of psychology. His deep religious nature, his consciousness both of union with the Father and of the Messianic calling, his idea of the kingdom of God, his sense of oneness with men,

his hope for the future, indeed, every phase of his nature and of his unfolding character, can be understood only in accordance with those laws which govern the highest human life.

Perhaps there is no subject upon which psychology has exerted a more decisive influence than upon the doctrine of the life after death. All the questions which come up with reference to the development of the kingdom of God on earth, of a so-called probation after death, of a Second Coming, and subjects associated with this in theological discussion, of punishment and blessedness, have been profoundly modified in the precise degree to which the essential laws of the human consciousness have become more fully known. Here everything is judged by the nature of spirit and the laws of personality. Here, too, as elsewhere in theology, the point of view is changing from the outer to the inner world.

In a word, then, all the presentations of the Scriptures, and all the teachings of the church, and all the beliefs of the present day have to submit themselves to psychology for adjudication.

As to the use that is to be made of evolution: it is to be frankly and heartily accepted as furnishing an interpretative principle to all those events with which theology is concerned. The bearing of this law is evident in two directions. First, in respect to the world itself. All that is, is to be viewed as a becoming. So far as creation and the order of the world has significance for the theologian, evolution is the key by which the meaning of these realities is to be conceived of. From the scope of this law it will not do to except man in his constitution or origin. We cannot declare

that man's body has come about by evolution, but not his mental, moral, and religious capacity. And with reference to the person of Christ, so far as explanation is warranted, this also must not be withdrawn from the play of the same law. Let it not be supposed that this is a repudiation of the supernatural, and thus a reduction of the world to a naturalistic basis. Such an alternative could only be real to one to whom evolution and naturalism were synonymous terms, to whom, therefore, evolution and supernaturalism were mutually antagonistic notions. If, however, evolution is the constant, universal method of the divine action, then we shall find in it neither naturalism on the one hand, nor on the other hand an arbitrary and violent supernaturalism. "All things are of God."

Secondly, Christianity, both in its origin and in its development, is subject to the same law. Christianity is not an absolutely new religious phenomenon; its roots are deep in the past. Every element of it has its history. The study of comparative religion discloses the same law in every one of the world's great faiths. Investigation is rendering it ever more clear that the religion of the Hebrews, out of which Christianity sprang, was a development of the Semitic religious consciousness from an earlier polytheistic belief. This being the case in all the other religions, a strong presumption is created that we shall find the same law in the unfolding of Christianity. We have indeed to distinguish historical from essential Christianity. Historical Christianity is the body of beliefs and particularly the life which has characterized the church in the various stages of her experience. Essential Christianity is that creative spirit and principle of life

which, beheld in its perfection in Jesus Christ, is organizing human society after the type of Christ. But essential Christianity appears only in historical form. This may be regarded from three points of view — life, idea or doctrine, and revelation.

The Christian life is but the further development of the religious life already found in Israel. The circle of interests, the personal and social ideas, are such as could arise only on such a background. Here is no sudden and complete break, but the fruiting of that which has been long in flower. The same is true of every one of the Christian doctrines of the Apostolic age; so far as these had their origin in the Hebrew consciousness, they were already prepared for in the great prophets, or those who sought later to interpret the religious life in terms of the prevailing philosophy. The doctrine of God, of Christ in terms of the Logos, of creation and providence, of man and sin, of atonement and justification, of the future of the kingdom of God both here and hereafter, and finally, of the Trinity, — each of these doctrines, so far as it appears in the New Testament, is explicable only in the light of previous or contemporary Jewish ideas. And even revelation is no exception to this law. Every one of the separate disclosures of God within the human consciousness presupposes conditions without which it never could have arisen. So true is this, that each one of the truths of redemption which has emerged in human experience can be dated when we know the general religious ideas of the time, the history of those ideas which have paved the way for the one in question, and particularly the degree of development to which the highest religious consciousness of

the nation has arrived. It is this principle which constitutes Christianity a historical religion and requires that it be historically interpreted.

The law of evolution is as true of the unfolding as it is of the genesis of Christian doctrine. In the study of this process, three points of interest claim attention: the heredity of doctrine, the environment in which it grows, and the essential principle by which it is animated. We have already seen that all the Christian doctrines have their roots in the earlier Jewish beliefs. It is only necessary to refer here to the fact, first, that profound modifications of these doctrines have been brought about through the conditions in which the church has been placed, and, secondly, that the essence of Christianity has remained, through all the changing conceptions and even corruptions of it, a principle of exhaustless development. We are to remind ourselves that in the Greek period of Christianity, and later in the Roman period, transformations were wrought in theology. And this is not strange. For it could not be that Christianity came into vital contact with the two most potent forces of the ancient world and yet remained wholly unaffected by them. Just as earlier the Hebrew religion received lasting contributions from Babylonia and Persia, and later, after the conquest of Alexander, from Greek thought, so Christianity found in Greek philosophy the forms in which to clothe her speculative construction of the world as divine, and in her organization of the church borrowed from the Roman state the type of her constitution; nor is it to be wondered at that she at length failed to discriminate what she owed to Greece and Rome and what to Palestine. We cannot, however,

ignore this fact. On the contrary, it will be our task to seek for the essence of Christianity under the various forms which it has assumed in its historical evolution.

We have now to define the relation of the Christian consciousness to theology. This will appear in answer to several questions. What is the Christian consciousness? What is its relation to those realities which are commonly regarded as sources of theology? Is it itself the real and immediate source of theology?

I. What is the Christian consciousness? This aspect of life has, since Schleiermacher, come to occupy a distinctive place in the thought of the church. According to him, it is the feeling of absolute dependence upon God as this is determined by the opposition of sin and grace. This feeling has for each one its immediate origin in the Christian community, while that of the community owes its initiative to Christ. This account of the matter is undoubtedly true, if we regard it only on the experimental side. But since the consciousness has been communicated by Christ to his followers, there must be in him something which is not yet in them. We have, therefore, to complete the conception of Schleiermacher with another, an ideal side, in which the opposition of sin and grace has been transcended, and we rise in thought to that pure and perfect union with God which Christ himself realized, and which it is the aim of the gospel to create in us. If for the Christian man here below the law of the spirit of life in Christ has virtually set him free from the law of sin and death, yet, on the other hand, his life is actually developed through moral and spiritual conflict even down to the very moment of death.

There are many varieties of religious experience which may perhaps not improperly be classed as Christian. By the descriptive term "Christian," however, two things are intended. First, it is a definite type of consciousness, and, like all types, marked by an essential characteristic associated with properties which are recognizable, coherent, and mutually related. The nature of the type may be variously ascertained: by an inquiry concerning the formative principle of Christendom; by the study of a commonly accepted supreme instance of it; or by an analysis of the properties by which it is constituted. Under all the varieties and even aberrations of experience in the Christian church, one principle may be discerned from the beginning, around which the thought, the worship, the institutions, and the real life of the church has crystallized. The type under consideration has once been realized, so far at least as realization was possible in an individual human life; yet since the type is not simply individual but also social, to be developed through the experience of the race into its ideal form, we must seek not only in Jesus Christ, but also in humanity as progressively renewed by the gospel, for the full content and meaning of this consciousness. An analysis reveals the spirit of Christ quickening to a life like his own; on the one hand causing grace to triumph over sin in a spirit of filial trust in God, and on the other hand begetting an organic union with other souls animated with the same spirit.

Secondly, this consciousness is created by the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Never has this truth received finer statement than in Paul's account of his own transition from the contemporary Jewish to the

Christian law of life (Gal. i, 11-17). According to his explanation, the new principle which came to dominate him originated with no fellow-man, nor was it interpreted to him by any human being, but it was the inner, immediate, unassisted revelation of God in Christ, through which the meaning of the Christian life became clear to him. He believed that his own will played no part in this, except that of wholly opposing it. He was completely unaware that the logic of his experience had already led him up to the very threshold of a new idea of life, when suddenly, like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, the Christian ideal of life burst upon him ; in that vision he beheld the Son of God, crucified indeed, but living in the celestial world, from henceforth the type and power of a divine life among men. Without stopping here to inquire whether the Apostle has given a correct interpretation of what led up to his great experience, it is enough for us to call attention to a single disclosure of his autobiographical confession, — an objective element of his experience which was not from man, but from God. There is a subjective side to this consciousness, but this is neither more nor less than the free and ever more complete response of the human to the Divine Will, of the finite reason to the Infinite Intelligence, until the person becomes an organ for the divine self-revelation. Accordingly, the Christian consciousness is another name for that filial consciousness in which man responds to God's good will, in which the spirit of Christ is reproduced in the life of his followers, whereby they are " enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness."¹

¹ *Westminster Catechism*, Question 35.

II. We are now in a position to inquire what relation this consciousness sustains to the Scriptures and to the doctrinal teachings of the church, and what use we are to make of both of these in our investigation.

First, as to the Scriptures. These are the residuum of a powerful literature created by the spirit of that historical religion which culminated in the revelation of God's grace in Jesus Christ. The Bible is not a book of science, although it embodies the scientific notions of the ages to which it belongs. It is not a book of philosophy, although it contains a profound philosophy of religion and of life. It is not a book of history, although one may read in it the splendid, even if tragic, history of a great people. It is not a treatise in theology, with accurate definition, with propositions formulated according to a uniform type of thought, with part articulated to part, the whole unfolded into a system of divinity. It is, on the contrary, a book of religion. It does indeed record the beliefs, the institutions, the customs, and the hopes of a great people, striving to realize their national existence on the basis of their developing conception of God. On the human side, therefore, the Scriptures are an incomparable source whence one may draw materials for the history of Israel, — the origins of its development, its religious knowledge and modes of worship, its sacred institutions, its social ethics, its political ideals, its dominant personages, its relation to surrounding peoples, its eventual overthrow as a nation, and the reëmergence of its spirit in Christianity. Here, too, as in a mirror, we may trace the conditions in which every phase of the life of Israel unfolded, and the beginnings of that mighty spiritual movement which we find reported in

the New Testament. In no other literature of the world does one find so powerfully depicted the elemental passions by which humanity is swayed and the struggles of the human spirit out of which emerges the ethical and religious personality. To one who acknowledges in this history no special redemptive element, the story of Israel's life and of the early days of the new community which owed its existence to Jesus Christ is of surpassing interest. History, folklore, statecraft, development of the family, the tribe, the commonwealth, the gradual formation of the nation like that of other Semitic peoples, appearance of those deep problems which are the mile-posts of all civilizations, — the meaning of evil and suffering and inequalities in the lot of men, the reality and significance of the moral order of the world, the rise of a social democracy, an idealism which, chastened and sober, rises triumphant over every obstacle, — these and other features of the Bible make it an intensely human book, and give it a power over thought and feeling unequalled by that of any other literary work in the world. The characteristic of the New in distinction from the Old Testament is that it draws for us the picture of Jesus Christ, it reports many of his words and deeds, it contains also interpretations which some of his followers placed upon his life and death and continued mighty power among men, together with an account of the beginnings of the Christian communities, and of the ideas and hopes with which they were animated in their personal character and the propagation of the gospel.

Such in barest outline are the Scriptures. In a specific sense these may be regarded as the source of

the Christian consciousness. This is true in two ways. (1) They are the earliest and, therefore, on the whole the most nearly authentic report and interpretation of those events in which the gospel came to manifestation in human life. If we would know what Christianity is, we must penetrate into the consciousness of the first disciples of Christ. So far as this consciousness was derived from Christ himself, we are thus penetrating into the consciousness of the historical Jesus. From the character of the Apostolic church, from the interpretation of Christ which one finds in the apostles, and from the simple narratives of the gospel, we recover as far as possible the action of Jesus of Nazareth, of Judæa, and of Calvary. Interest here is not simply scientific, whether historical, psychological, or even theological, but first of all ethical and religious. Christian thinkers will always come to the New Testament, and indeed to all the early sources of our knowledge of the Master, with the single deep longing which has never yet been fully satisfied: "We would see Jesus!"

(2) The Bible has power as no other book to "find" men,—the power to search the depths of the human soul and to waken within it those slumbering capacities wherein man is like God. This is its paramount distinction. Its "irresistible impression upon the conscience," its disclosure and condemnation of sin, its revelation of God as a Father, its trumpet call to a life of brotherhood among men, its presentation of the divine moral order of the world before which sin, sorrow, and evil are to disappear, the hope of individual and social perfection in union with God, carry the force of a mighty appeal to the higher spirit

of man. Neither miracle nor prophecy can make these realities more imperative than they already are in their unaided impact upon the human heart. The Apollo Belvidere and the Venus of Milo, the Iliad of Homer and the Hamlet of Shakespeare, the Messiah of Handel and the Symphonies of Beethoven, the St. Peter's of Michael Angelo and the Sistine Madonna of Raphael, need no other demonstration of their unrivaled greatness than that of their capacity to appeal to the deepest springs of thought and feeling. The Christian man will with Coleridge ever have to confess, "in the Bible there is more that *finds* me than I have experienced in all other books put together."¹

Although, then, the Christian consciousness is the product of the Scriptures, yet it is not the product of the whole of the Scriptures, nor is it bound to maintain a passive, unreflective, uncritical attitude towards them. Beliefs the most fantastic, practices the most revolting, and doctrines the most absurd, have all appealed to some portion of the Scriptures for support. Accordingly, one who will make a rational use of the Bible must discriminate the content from the form, and in the content, the essential from the accidental. Some of the New England hills are covered with huge boulders, which lie huddled together as if they were children of the rocks below ; but a more careful scrutiny fails to discover any rocks of this character in the underlying strata, and forces one to the conclusion that these superficial stones owe their position to the action of glaciers, by which they have been broken off, taken up, and carried long distances and dropped in their present resting-places. In the human

¹ *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit.*

body are organs which have no correlation with any functional activity of the present system, but can only be explained as survivals of a previous condition, in which they played a part in the animal economy. In the Scriptures one comes upon ideas which have no essential connection with their context, which in the movement of religious life have been brought from a distant past, from an alien system of thought. They, too, are fragments, survivals of a different view of God, of the world, and of man; and their significance lies not in their isolated position, but in their history, and in the witness which they bear to the fact that the organic development has passed beyond the need of them. It becomes necessary, therefore, if one is to use particular texts as evidence of essential Christian belief, first of all to make sure of the relation they sustain to the religious life, and to the body of truth in which they are embedded.

This is indeed a task of extreme difficulty, but the difficulty, however great, must not deter one from the undertaking. How shall this be done? Only in the light of three distinct ideas. There is in Jesus' teaching a sovereign, creative truth, to which all else in the Scriptures stands in a secondary and more or less loose relation. This essential truth has, and must have had, its necessary unfolding. That and that alone which grows out of this radical principle is available and authoritative for theology.

(1) What, then, is this central truth to which the other elements in the teaching of Jesus, and accordingly all else in the Bible, are subordinate? In order to answer this question we have to ask, What in the consciousness of Jesus is its central and all-determin-

ing principle? This is none other than that of his ethical and spiritual Sonship to God, in which is reflected the Fatherhood of God. We have here not only the distinguishing reality in Jesus' consciousness, but the essential principle in all religious experience, whether before or since his day. To this interpretative principle each several portion of the Bible must be subjected, and by it stand or fall. When, then, we go to the New Testament, this provides the key to an understanding of its presentation of the nature and attributes of God, the meaning of the world in its constitution, its conservation, and its development under divine providential action. In the light of this principle we judge of the ideal moral relation of all men to God and of God to all men. This interprets to us the person of Christ and the secret of redemption; and it places in our hand the clue by which to penetrate the labyrinth of the future.

(2) This essential truth had its necessary unfolding not only in the consciousness of Jesus, but also in the religious consciousness of the Hebrews of which the Scriptures are the fruit. Once an idea has germinated, in however feeble degree, in the life of man, it is bound henceforth to develop until its full energy is disclosed. But at the same time other ideas will spring up and compete for the mastery. In the sphere of religion, for instance, the most diverse notions of the supernatural have at different periods prevailed — now polytheistic, now henotheistic, now monotheistic; and the character of the divine has been variously conceived — now as malignant, now as partly evil and partly good, now as wholly good. The Scriptures themselves being witness, we may read in them the

progressive disclosure in the human consciousness of the idea and meaning of God. We are not surprised to find here and there indications of an unworthy notion of God, the origin of which is to be traced to mythology, to polytheism, to low ethical ideals. Gradually, however, the idea of God was purged of its baser elements, and in the consciousness of Jesus for the first time beamed forth in undimmed moral splendor, — an idea which only after long delays has been in the beliefs of his later followers reflected in its purity.

(3) We have to add that only that in the Scriptures which centres in the moral absoluteness, that is, in the Fatherhood of God, “or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced” from it, is available for theology. We cannot, therefore, take over everything taught by a prophet of the Old or an apostle of the New Dispensation and incorporate this into our system of truth, with the single proviso that we have an accurate exegesis of its original meaning. For since not every single thing had its source in the circle of the Christian revelation, every notion does not sustain an equally vital relation to the central truth. If, for example, it were shown that Jesus shared the common feeling of the Jewish people in respect of demons, this would not necessarily bind us. And the fact that an apostle held a certain belief, as concerning the end of the world, would not of itself be compelling to faith; we should wish first to know how he came by it, then whether and how far it was organically related to the essential heart of the gospel. We have here a reason why an indiscriminate use of texts of Scripture is unwarranted. Even when historical

criticism has established the genuineness of the words, and exegesis has laid bare the original meaning of the writer, we have still to raise the question whether what is presented is in harmony with the sovereign teaching of the Master. However pure and strong one's idea may be, or however radical one's intended departure from traditional beliefs which are inconsistent with a new point of view, yet one will inevitably, and even unwittingly, retain some elements of the hereditary, uncritical, and mistaken notions of his time. And the New Testament speakers and writers are no exception to this rule. In citing, therefore, the New Testament for doctrinal purposes, it is to be remembered that its authors came to the gospel with the beliefs of their people, and that after accepting this, they were never thereafter able completely to free themselves from admixture of traditional notions with the essential truths of the gospel. But while we make this assertion, we also hold that here in the New Testament, shining with its own clear and steady light, is the truth which has from the beginning organized Christian experience, the creative source of all that makes Christian theology a rational interpretation of God in Christian life and hope. This truth is, as we have seen, that of the perfect moral Sonship of Jesus to the Father, in which is involved the universal sonship and brotherhood of man.

Concerning the relation of the Christian consciousness to the theology of the church, several features require discussion. (1) The essential condition for the development of theology is the continuity of religious experience. The Christian life has in every age been nourished from the same divine source, however

diverse may have been the interpretations of it. Certain elements of experience have been constant. On the side of intelligence the religious life has indeed undergone profound changes, but on the side of feeling and will there are within it to-day no elements which were not already present in the consciousness of the Apostolic community, and which have not persisted through all the history of the church.

(2) Theology is a continuous attempt to interpret this unbroken religious experience under the conditions made possible to it through each succeeding age. As theology exists at any one time, it is a resultant not only of preceding thought, but also of the peculiar experience and the prevailing philosophy of the time. As experience or philosophy changes, theology correspondingly changes. It is thus evident that the theology of an age is in part a product of the consciousness of that age. It could have arisen at neither an earlier nor a later period. To a degree surpassed in no other department of human thought, theology gathers up the religious, philosophical, even political and social notions of a people and welds these into a compact system, in which is reflected, as in a mirror, the total ideas of the given time. The theology of any period presupposes points of view, methods of interpretation, philosophical postulates, in a word, human historical conditions which, once realized, quickly pass away, never to return. It is the interpretation of the age to itself in terms of religious thought ; it must, therefore, use such terms and with such meanings as will be intelligible to that age. The theology of the Hebrew prophets, the Greek tragedians, the Greek philosophers, and the Jewish rabbis of the Greek period is

dated and understood only when we know the peculiar ideas of God, the world, and man which prevailed among those people from the eighth to the first century B. C. In like manner the theology of a Paul or a John is only intelligible on the background of the first century after the death of Christ. The theology of the Apostolic group is not that of the Apologists of the second century, nor is the theology of the Apologists that of Origen, of Athanasius, of John of Damascus, or of the Scholastics. The religious genius of an Augustine, an Anselm, or an Edwards, just as that of a Plato, or a Dante, or a Milton, however great its capacities, must dream its dreams and clothe its speculations in the scientific notions of its own day.

It follows from this that every new epoch in Christian experience brings about modifications in theology. The great transition periods of religious thought have been those in which the religious consciousness has been stirred to profounder depths, and accordingly compelled to find ampler interpretations of its content. From Jesus' unparalleled consciousness of God came the new thing in his teaching. To that first creative hour in his experience, "when it was the good pleasure of God to reveal his Son" in him, Paul with an inexhaustible fascination returned again and again; it was for him ever afterward the secret source of that "mystery of the gospel" which it was the glory of his life to search and unfold. In further confirmation of this law, one has only to refer to two great modern movements, one under Luther, the other under Schleiermacher, which took their rise in a revival of the religious consciousness, the first over against the formalism of the Roman, the second against the apathy

and even repugnance to Christianity in the Protestant, community. We may also point with satisfaction to the religious history of our country. With reference to particular statements of doctrine by leading churches or representative councils, or theological works by distinguished individuals, it has been characteristic of New England Theology never slavishly to follow any doctrinal standard, be it the *Westminster* or *Savoy Confession*, or the teaching of theologians, as Jonathan Edwards or Nathaniel Emmons. It was claimed by his son that President Edwards and those immediately associated with him had made no less than ten improvements in theology. The history of New England theology in every generation since shows that the successors of these men have been animated by the same freedom and vigor of inquiry, and never more so than at the present time. "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed!"

(3) It is to be considered that since Christianity had to make its way at first in a world in which philosophical presuppositions were already in possession of the field, and the great leaders of thought came to the exposition and defense of the gospel with the conviction that the speculative ideas of the schools in which they had been trained were also divine, it was felt that if the teachings of the church were to become intelligible and effective to the Greek mind, the Christian faith must be interpreted by means of the ideas and terms of the Greek philosophy. In order to see precisely what took place, one has only to compare the theology of an Origen or an Athanasius with that of the Synoptists.

In recent times, however, two diametrically opposite

positions have been taken up with reference to this fact. One is the conviction that not only has the development of doctrine followed a necessary law, and the only course open to it, but also that at different periods different aspects of belief have received satisfactory solution and definition, so that now in the dogmas of the church we have a final and, therefore, authoritative statement of theological ideas. In a word, the great historic doctrines are not open to reconsideration and revision. The other position is that contributions from the side of philosophy, which are by their nature incapable of organic union with Christian truth, have produced alterations in the very content of faith and should accordingly be eliminated from Christian doctrine, to be replaced by a spiritual philosophy which is but the rational unfolding of the inner meaning of faith.

With reference to the general position here indicated, it is plain that so far as any theological doctrine rests upon a philosophical idea rather than upon a concrete Christian experience, it must be revised in order that the Christian element in it may become all in all. So far as traditional theology grew out of a theory of the world and of man which has been superseded by the hypothesis of evolution, it must all along the line submit to fresh interpretation, in order to bring it into accord with the newer and truer view of man and the world.

If now we carry this principle up into the region of the Christian consciousness, every known quality of God and the entire spiritual meaning of the world are involved. All that is essentially known of God comes to light in the experience of redemption; and all

that is expressed yields itself perfectly to ethical interpretation. For the Christian consciousness there are in God no dark, unintelligible remainders. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Jesus' unequaled knowledge of God was not drawn from anything external to himself, but was the interpretation of his own experience of the Father. He knew nothing of the philosophical proofs of the being of God, nor was he acquainted with the speculative methods by which religious truth was later under Greek influences established. He went neither to nature nor to history for the first-hand source of his spiritual intelligence. Like the prophets, like Socrates, he found within, in the world of rational and ethical ideals, in the immediate disclosure of God to him, those supreme spiritual realities which are the substance of his teaching and the secret of his power over men. This must be understood to mean, not that there was no aid, or stimulus, or medium to his knowledge, but only that, however his knowledge was awakened, it got its final authentication from within. It was the same with Paul; although when referring to a certain class of men, he speaks of the natural world as a means by which they might perceive God, yet for himself and for those to whom he writes, the disclosure of God in Christ within Christian experience is the all-sufficient source of the knowledge of God.

The Christian consciousness is, therefore, a microcosm in which is reflected the entire knowable significance of the world. Accordingly, in the interpretation of the universe, the starting-point, the principle, and the end, so far as theology is concerned with it,—creation, providence, and the relation of the natural world

to the ethical and spiritual aims of life both here and hereafter, — are to be found in the religious consciousness as Christian.

If, then, any theological doctrines concerning God or the world depend on philosophical presuppositions which do not take their rise in the Christian consciousness or are incompatible with it, they are to be ignored, and if need be, repudiated. On the other hand, if in the traditional theology we find ideas which, although historically drawn from a source other than that of the Christian consciousness, yet are in essential harmony with it or may be deduced from it, then we shall have to bring these into organic connection with the truths which have grown out of our consciousness of God.

III. There remains yet for consideration a question concerning the relation of the Christian consciousness to the organizing of Christian doctrine, namely, whether it is the real and immediate source of the same. For theology only three possible sources can be alleged — the Scriptures, or the dogmas of the church, or the consciousness of the Christian man. From what has been said, therefore, it is evident that the Scriptures are not the immediate source of theology; these are cast not in the abstract, but in the concrete form, with a direct appeal to the ethical and religious life. Truth in this form is, however, available only after an interpreting and appropriating process. Moreover, a believing consciousness is necessary in order to lift up and harmonize their varied teaching into a living unity; otherwise they remain a standard indeed, but impracticable, because wholly external and broken up into dissimilar and disconnected portions. Nor are the dogmas

of the church final ; to regard them as such would be to misconceive their true nature, and to confound the history of dogma with Christian theology.

We are thus shut up to only one immediate source of theology — the consciousness of the Christian man. This is at heart, however, the same that has found expression in the writings of the New Testament and in the dogmas of the church. We must go even further, and affirm that the source of doctrine is the source also of faith. And this is no other than the gospel, the revelation of God's grace in Christ ; not the gospel as objective to the human spirit, presented simply as a subject of speculative inquiry, but the gospel as a divine power creating faith, uniting the soul to God, setting free from sin, and quickening the hope of eternal life. As there can be no Christian consciousness apart from the working of divine grace, so the revelation of the gospel is of no effect for theology unless appropriated by the willing heart. The Christian consciousness is the point where grace and faith meet in a living experience ; from this fact the contents of theology are drawn. For this reason, he who would interpret Christianity must himself be a Christian believer. He does not as critic stand outside the truth, indifferent to the outcome of the process of thought ; on the contrary, the more he takes up into his own experience the divine fullness of life, the more fruitful becomes his presentation. This is the principle of the Reformation. "The heart makes the theologian."

Yet theology is not as subjective as even this would lead one to suppose. For as no one can shut himself entirely off from the world of life in which he was

born and the great instincts of the race to which he belongs, so his convictions are still further determined by the beliefs and institutions of his own time and the doctrines of the historic church, the roots of which run back to the soil of the New Testament. Between him and those who have preceded him is an organic, even if unconscious, connection. No individual is or can be wholly isolated. His very nature, the development of his consciousness, his moral and religious life, are social. He who would present his beliefs in a scientific, rational form can do so only as he draws more or less from the common store of human religious experience. "It is impossible to insist too much upon the organic and indissoluble bond which thus attaches individual experience to historic and collective experience."¹ If, therefore, the immediate source of theology is the personal religious consciousness, yet the ultimate source is the redemptive revelation so far as this has created the Scriptures and has quickened the Christian church through all her history.

¹ Sabatier, *Religions of Authority*, etc., p. 352, Eng. tr.

II

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

OUR first task is to inquire concerning the psychological origin and appreciation of the belief in God. The study of religion warrants the judgment that amongst the earliest forms in which the religious consciousness manifested itself was the worship both of nature-spirits and of ancestor-spirits. To nature were attributed personal qualities ; trees and other natural objects were thought of as possessing life, or as the dwelling-places of powers like those which animated the bodies of men. The conflict of light and darkness, the thunder-storm with its vague but awful terrors, the mighty forces of nature whose secret was not understood, gave rise to the great mythological nature-spirits. The mystery of death, coupled with the experience of dreams, led to the belief in the survival of the "double" of him whose body had perished. Since this "double" was supposed to have power still for good or evil over the earthly life of men, its aid was invoked through prayer and sacrifice. As civilization advanced and religious ideas developed, the spirits were yet further humanized and differentiated ; certain ones, to whom were assigned preëminence over the others, were constituted a hierarchy of gods and organized according to the type of earthly societies. In course of time this belief gave place to still another, which appeared in two forms : according to the

first, in the hierarchies the chief seat was allotted to one god, the others being left in a subordinate position ; according to the second, in each tribe or nation one god was conceived of as the tutelary divinity, although at the same time the existence of other gods worshiped by neighboring peoples was in no wise denied. At length, the principle of ethical unity in the world and in human society so far asserted itself in the consciousness of the Hebrew people that there grew up the idea of a practical monotheism, and finally that of a reasoned monotheism.

From the stages of belief which led to the conception of one only living and true God, two opposite conclusions have been drawn. According to one, as there are no supernatural beings answering to the earliest, so there is no objective divine reality corresponding to the final, idea in the series. All the stages of religious belief represent that illusory process through which the mind has to pass on its way to a real interpretation of the world. The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte does indeed tell us that the theological is the first of three stages through which humanity has gone in its intellectual development, the others being the metaphysical, and the positive or scientific. In the theological stage, men attribute natural phenomena to the action of unseen supernatural powers, hence fetichism, polytheism, monotheism. In the metaphysical stage, the gods have given place to the abstract, impersonal forces of nature. In the third or final stage, the idea of force itself has dropped out, and only observed facts occupy the field of consciousness ; men no longer think of causes, but only of laws of phenomena. The first and second stages are attempts to explain the world

in terms of human consciousness, that is, of philosophy, but they reveal the incompetence of the mind to know anything of causes, and at the same time the necessity that it rest in the observation and classification of facts.

According to the second interpretation, there has been from the first, implicit in all forms of religious consciousness, the idea which has found rational expression in the Christian notion of God. Two laws may be appealed to. One is derived from the very nature of human intelligence. Every idea, however strong and well defined at the present time, was insignificant at its first emergence in thought. Like man himself, it may now be inclined to disown its heredity, yet in spite of denial, in its lowest, humblest, apparently unethical forms there was already immanent the promise and potency of all that has since developed. In fetichism however rude, in animism however fantastic, in polytheism however revolting, is the principle of the supernatural, the divine, the Absolute. Secondly, all human thinking is bound to symbols. Thought at the outset may be crude, later more refined, always increasingly spiritualized with the advance of rational apprehension, yet however far it advances, it can never dispossess itself of its relative and, therefore, its incomplete character. In whatever stage the idea appears in human consciousness, it involves essentially, it contains implicitly, even if it can reflect only imperfectly, the infinite reality of God. It is, accordingly, from lowest to highest, — in fetichism, polytheism, henotheism, monotheism, — simply a question of degree of truth.

If we inquire more particularly concerning the idea

of God as it took final shape in the Christian consciousness, we discover the central principle of it to be love. The Old Testament discloses various preparatory stages through which apprehension of God as love passed on its way to ultimate expression. In the New Testament the love of God, dominating the consciousness of Jesus as the unique Son of the Father, retains and perfects the elements of the Old Testament idea, comes to complete manifestation in Jesus Christ, and is henceforth the final and interpretative truth as to God's character and action.

If, however, the perfect and final disclosure of God is love, yet the earlier stages of man's apprehension of him are registered in terms which embody partial aspects of his ethical character. As the revelation was still incomplete, so the idea of the divine nature was imperfect, and the language by which it was described could convey only a limited impression of the divine reality. Two of the terms, because of their prominence in the Scriptures, have exercised a powerful influence in theology and deserve more than passing notice. These are holiness and righteousness.

The holiness of God is, according to the Old Testament, that quality of his nature in virtue of which he chose and separated the Hebrews from other peoples, in order that these might first themselves be holy, that is, God's own people (Lev. xix, 2; Ezek. xxxvi, 22-33). This final, completely ethical character of the Old Testament religion constitutes its distinction from all other world-religions. Furthermore, God is himself the source of redemption, whose infinitely active but unseen ethical life is revealed in opposition to sin and in electing and sanctifying love. Finally, holiness was

conceived of as his unique elevation above all that is mundane, corruptible, and sinful. This does not mean, however, that according to the native idea of the Hebrews, spirit is the antithesis of matter. Nevertheless, however good the world was, the highest and best within it was only shadow as compared with the ineffable effulgence which belongs to the being of God; even the worthiest human achievement fell infinitely below the will of the "Holy One of Israel."

In the New Testament, God is holy, not merely as the absolute Law-giver, but especially as the principle of holiness in his children. The contention of Ritschl¹ that the notion of holiness in the Old Testament was dropped at the threshold of the New Testament is not supported by the facts. The truth is that the idea of holiness in the New Testament enters upon a further stage of development, in which it is finally set free from the limitations and imperfections of the Hebrew conception. Here we have the holiness of God concentrated in the Holy Spirit, the principle of the divine self-communication to men.

The holiness of God designates, therefore, (1) the agreement of the divine will with the divine ideal, and (2) the absolute purity and goodness of God — his ethical transcendence; thus (3) he is the cause of those ethical relations in which he makes his own the ends also of the creation, especially of men. Since self-affirmation is an element in all true self-communication, he necessarily reacts against sin. The nature of the holiness of God is, however, only partially conceived in relation to law. The supreme manifestation of the divine holiness is seen first in redemption, wherein

¹ *Justification and Reconciliation*, vol. iii, p. 255, Eng. tr.

God appears as the Source of all those gracious activities by which man is set free from sin in union with God.

The righteousness of God designates his self-consistency. This forces itself upon human apprehension from two directions — experience and reason. In religious experience the two haunting questions have ever been, first, whether particular events were further disclosures of the divine righteousness, and secondly, whether these new manifestations could be harmonized with what was already believed as to the divine nature. In the history of the progressive revelation of the purpose of God, one comes upon traces of continual conflict in the greatest minds of Israel over the admission of any new element into the already accepted law of God's dealing with men, and over the reconciliation of a later with an earlier principle of the divine action. Such conflict was inevitable, whenever men faced a situation in which what had been implicit, perhaps unnoticed, in God's dealing with men came to fuller manifestation and yet at the same time appeared inconsistent with the law of previous action.

Moreover, the righteousness of God was dependent on the rational demand that the Source and Ground of obligation and of all moral relations himself correspond with the advancing human ethical ideal. In any given age, no action can be attributed to God which fails to satisfy the highest human reason of that age, as may be seen by reference to the plea of Abraham, Ezekiel, Job, and the theodicy of the Apostle Paul. There will indeed be mysteries in the divine dealing, due in part to the initial aspect of revelation, and in part to the infinite scope of the divine purpose :

but in either case, since God is one, we rightly affirm that the element of mystery equally with that which is known, is purely and perfectly ethical.

We must, however, make this account of the divine character more concrete. Love is the description of a relationship as well as that of a quality. The relationship is that of Fatherhood.

In unfolding the meaning of this, it is to be noted that the designation, Father, is the last in a long series of names given to God. We have seen that the names attributed to God in the history of revelation are a witness to the increasing apprehension of his nature. They divide themselves into three groups, one of which appears to be concerned with a hierarchy of divinities, another has reference to the world as the ordered system of forces and laws, while a third covers the relations of God to men in their dependence upon him.

In the first group are such terms as El Elyon and El Elohim, which characterize the earlier stages of Hebrew religious thought and attribute to God a degree of excellence which is denied to other divinities. In the second group are found El Shaddai (Almighty God) and Jehovah Sabaoth (Lord of Hosts). It was necessary for the religious experience of men that they assure themselves that he who was the object of their trust was not less but greater than all the powers of the world in which their life was passed. Not until they were set free from the paralyzing fear to which nature-worship often bears witness, and not until they were lifted above all the transient forms of the physical world to the clear height of the supremacy of the spirit and taught to find in God the Source and

Ground of all that is, could they rise to such a worship and trust as was required to place religion on a basis of pure spirituality and vindicate for the object of their trust the position which belonged to him in the reason and the heart of man. Both of these developments to which reference has now been made tended to issue in a transcendental idea of God which required to be supplemented by a third.

The record of this is preserved for us in a group of names drawn from human analogies, expressing what is highest and best in human relationships. It is a law that the knowledge of God emerges and clears itself in the actual relations of living men. Each new and great experience discloses a deeper element of the divine personality. As social life becomes more complicated, men behold in its various aspects analogies which they carry over to God. He who embodied the most distinguished function of the community was a partial representative of the divine reality; the name which men applied to him was in still higher degree true of God. Thus we have Judge, King, Law-giver. But even the more common and humble relations were not overlooked; on the contrary, they furnished some of the tenderest and most precious names of God. There is, for example, Refuge, Saviour, Redeemer, Shepherd. As the revelation unfolded still further, it laid hold of yet more intimate qualities of personal life. The relation of God to the so-called gods, or to the world, or even analogies drawn from distinguished forms of social order, are all inadequate to present this reality in its deepest character. And we come finally upon two relations of human life, the commonest, the most universal, the most intimate and real.

Israel is called the spouse of God, and the Son of God. God is indeed designated, not in set terms but only by implication, as the husband of Israel. He is also several times named the Father of his people — in the Old Testament only in the collective sense. In Jesus' consciousness this designation, which for more than a thousand years had been immanent in the Hebrew thought of God, and which had been for an equal period the Aryan name for the Supreme Being, took first place. Thus was presented to the religious consciousness the nature of God.

Here, then, three facts are pertinent. (1) Jesus found in his own consciousness as Son the key which opened to him the inmost heart of God. In his filial spirit was reflected the fatherly nature of God. Not by a process of reasoning, but by immediate intuition, he knew the deepest reality of the being of God. (2) This consciousness has become organic and constructive in the life of the world, and is destined to transform and dominate the entire religious thought respecting God. If, however, the all-determining law of the nature of God and of his relation to the universe is that which is expressed in Fatherhood, then the universe itself is a purpose of love, then all men are his children, then redemption is no afterthought or denial of his nature, no satisfaction of one to another part of his character, but a further revelation of his eternal will of good, a constituent element of his creative activity. (3) Our truest name for God is found only where the revelation of him is fullest and most adequate. Our knowledge of him is based in part upon the fact of the divine immanence. If one is permitted to speak of degrees of divine immanence,

then one must affirm that more of the real nature of God is in the human spirit than in any of the lower forms of existence, and that most of him is found in the highest ethical relations of men. Among these relations, none is so rich in content as that of human fatherhood; by this is naturally meant the entire parental relation, in which motherhood is included in that of the fatherhood. Thus we have not to ascend into the heaven of transcendental realities to bring God down, nor to descend into the depths of speculative philosophy to bring God up. But "the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart;" in the most beautiful relation of earthly life, and in the earliest word that falters on the lips of childhood, is found the most perfect symbol of the divine nature — Father.

If, now, we unfold the implications of this Fatherhood, it is evident (1) that it is not a transient phase, but an eternal principle of the divine nature. We cannot think of it as ever having begun to be. The advent of man within the creative activity of God does not first call out this quality, but man is one expression of this eternal reality. The universe itself, as self-differentiation of the nature of God, is a witness to this same principle. God is not Father merely since and because he created a world, but because he would waken in that which he created a response to his own purpose of love; he would find himself again in that to which he has given existence—his thought, his feeling, his will. We affirm Fatherhood as true of God with reference to all the past; the same principle, on the ground of the divine unchangeableness, must also be projected into the unending future.

(2) This fact of Fatherhood, as it is the highest

truth concerning God, must be the interpretative principle of all the divine attributes. Omniscience is the infinite knowledge of One who is perfect love. Omnipotence is the infinite power of One who is unlimited in aught save love. Omnipresence is the immediate universal manifestation of One whose ground for such manifestation is love. Sovereignty in God is rightly conceived only when it is saturated with the spirit of Fatherhood.

(3) Finally, if the principle of Fatherhood is an eternal fact in the divine nature, then in the apprehension of this fact lies naturally the beginning of that development in theology which has given to us the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. The correlative of Fatherhood is Sonship. On the metaphysical side, Fatherhood stands for ground, Sonship for derivation. Of this no better illustration can be offered than that of the ancient theologians — the fountain and the stream, the light and the radiance. This does not mean duality, in the sense of two separate entities. That which is derived is not itself complete, that which is distinct is not separate. The idea of God as Father is not perfect apart from that of Son. This is no blow struck at monotheism by which duo-theism is substituted therefor. But in the divine nature room is found, just as in the religious experience, so in thought, for the eternal Fatherhood and the eternal Sonship. This is not, indeed, the Hebrew monotheism; nor is it, on the contrary, the opening of a door back into polytheism. It is the setting forth, not of difference which disintegrates the divine being into irreconcilable fragments, but of distinctions which yet are perfectly unified in the divine nature. There is in

God a ground of all that is true of the divine nature as well as all that exists in the creation. There is in him also an eternal principle of self-revelation and of self-communication. In terms of philosophy, Fatherhood is the principle of cause; in terms of religious faith, Fatherhood is the ultimate source of the truth and grace revealed to men through Jesus Christ and communicated through the Holy Spirit.

Thus God is disclosed as personal, according to the likeness or analogy of the human personality, indeed, especially in the earlier development of religious thought, a spiritual, not a bodily-spiritual nature, unique and alone of his kind, whose necessary relation to the world is an expression of his rational will, and finally, as the alone Good.

When, however, the allegation is made that God is personal, the question is asked whether personality is not a purely finite notion, and then, in case God is personal, what the relation is of the divine to the human personality. Our human personality realizes itself in connection with the world and God. According to its ideal, it is a becoming which of necessity is never complete. The proof of its finiteness is that it depends on the objective world for the awakening and the unfolding of its powers. Finiteness constitutes not a cause, but a hindrance — inevitable and never to be transcended — to the realization of all that is involved in personality.¹ In the being of God, on the contrary, no such limitation finds place. The divine consciousness does indeed sustain a real relation to the phenomenal world and to finite persons, yet the cause of the consciousness is not in these apart from his will. God

¹ Cf. Lotze, *Microcosmos*, vol. ii, p. 688, Eng. tr.

is the only perfect personality ; of him alone can we say that he has a "completely organized experience."

Although the constituents of the human and the divine personality are, so far as we can know, the same, — self-conscious rationality and will, — yet we do not make the human the measure of the divine personality. The difference is that what is for man ideal is for God real. God is eternally what man tends to become — spirit. The question whether there is a mode of being higher than the personal is for us in our present life insoluble ; if there were super-personal beings, we never could know them. To admit that there are qualities in God which transcend or are different from rationality and will invalidates the truth of the divine personality only if the two sets of properties are held to be mutually contradictory and exclusive. Such a supposition is, however, contrary to possibility. Whatever else God is, we never can affirm of him less than rationality and will, or indeed any qualities which are inconsistent with these. Personality is, in any case, if not the exhaustive description, yet the necessary principle of the divine nature.

The chief objection to a doctrine of the personality of God is drawn from anthropomorphism. It is alleged that since personality in God is referred to as a necessary mode of human thinking, it may not correspond to the reality of the divine nature. God may be non-personal, or may exist in a manner superior to the personal. Anthropomorphism may, however, be regarded from two points of view. According to one view, the gods are only larger men, with human modes of thinking and feeling, with distinctively human virtues and defects. The principle by which this phenomenon is

explained is that in forming notions concerning the supernatural, man is compelled to think according to the limitations of his human conception, and the implication is that the limitation is fatal to any true knowledge of God; if there is a God at all, he must be wholly different from our thought of him. It is true that all religions have begun in this lower form of anthropomorphism. But it is one thing to discern and to correct the error in such a conception, and a very different matter to declare that the whole idea of the divine is a radical mistake. We have, indeed, to guard against making the human the measure of the divine personality; yet we never could know the divine at all, if this were essentially different from the human. It never can become subversive of our knowledge of God that our highest name for him is also our name for the highest human relationship, that of Fatherhood.

This leads to the other interpretation of anthropomorphism, that in a very real sense God belongs to the human type. The crowning characteristic of man is that he is personal. Then God is also personal. But it is said that to attribute personality to God is anthropomorphism. Such a statement, however, subverts the truth of God's personality only if we are prepared to separate theology from all other forms of human thought, and to declare of it alone that it is without validity. But all our knowledge of the natural world and all our descriptions of its phenomena are anthropomorphic, couched in terms of reason and will. Eliminate these features, and any world of thought would be absolutely emptied of all content, and any intelligible relation between it and us impossible.

With reference to God, unless we are content with bare affirmation of his existence, concerning which no further assertion may be made, we must go further and think of him in forms essential to the human mind. If we are to know God, it must be with the powers and limitations of our human nature. That the principle which is enshrined in our apprehension of God corresponds in some true sense to the reality, is guaranteed to us by a valid theory of knowledge. Even those philosophers who have from a particular interest denied to man the knowledge of God, have unconsciously made affirmations concerning him of the widest reaching character. Those who speak of the Absolute as "Cause," or as the "Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed," or as the "Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness," present an anthropomorphic conception, that is, a conception in terms of the human mind. Thus there is a lower and a higher anthropomorphism; but the higher is ever implicit in the lower, and the lower passes by imperceptible gradations into the higher, and in the higher its principle stands clearly revealed. Thus we may still speak of God as personal.

A further question, however, arises. Is God the absolute personality? If we inquire what is meant by the term, Absolute, we are met by several definitions. (1) There is the pure pantheistic Absolute, the false Infinite, which can be conceived only by denial of the finite, even as a relatively independent existence. (2) The Absolute possesses an infinite fullness of rational powers and lives in and for himself; his relation to the world is that of Creator who was able also not to create, and who therefore sustains no eternally neces-

sary relation to the world. (3) The Absolute is the "Universal of Universals." It is that which is by its very nature set free from all conditions and relations and limitations ; it eludes definition. It is an ultimate attenuation of thought, beyond which one cannot go. (4) The Absolute has being in and for itself, yet remains forever unpresented to the finite mind ; it is the substratum of the phenomenal world, the unity which lies behind all differences, insusceptible of further intelligible description.

This last position has been maintained from two very different interests. One is found in that development of religious thought which may be traced all the way from the neo-Platonist, Plotinus, to a phase of mediæval mysticism represented by John Scotus. God is the transcendent One, elevated above the categories of thought, even of being itself, in whom all finite contradictions are annulled. From the philosophical side also, God is declared to be unknowable. On the one hand, according to the sensational philosophy, thought is irrevocably held within the sphere of sensuous experiences, and is thus incompetent to rise into a region of supersensible realities, if such there be. On the other hand, according to the critical theory of knowledge, the universe is divided into the phenomenal and the noumenal, but between the two is fixed an impassable gulf. Since God belongs to the world not of appearance but of reality, he must remain forever unknown to the human reason.

With the thoroughgoing pantheistic notion of the Absolute we have no further concern: it leaves no room for the relative independence of the human person. As to the second idea of the Absolute, the tra-

ditional orthodox idea, since this offers no completely intelligible account of the relation of God to the world as Creator, we are compelled to abandon it. The last two notions of the Absolute agree in presenting it as a pure logical *abstractum*, unconditioned, unknowable, equal to nothing, an unfruitful and worthless vacuity. The prime question in religious philosophy, be it sensational or critical, is not whether God can be known, but solely as to the measure of man's knowledge of him. Further, if God be in himself either wholly or in any degree different from what he must seem to man, then concerning him the most diverse and contradictory notions may be entertained without the possibility of their refutation; then may also return the good old days of nominalism, when one could in the same breath both affirm and deny, or better still, the ecstasy of the mystic when, despairing of any knowledge of God by way of the discursive intelligence, he could by "contemplation" — a renunciation of rational thought — sink into and identify himself with the Great Abyss.

We have no interest in the notion of a logical Absolute except to guard against the substitution of it for the real Absolute by those who confuse logic with reality. Either God is the Absolute Being, or else there is no such Being. If he is the Absolute One, as all the greatest thinkers have persisted in affirming, then we must seek some definition of absoluteness which shall correspond with the reality of his nature. This aim is reached when we declare that God is not an infinite, self-identical All, nor One who sustains no intelligible relation to the creation, nor a Being utterly removed beyond the limits of human

apprehension involving the impotence of human thought, but One whose essential nature embraces all existence in a rational, organic unity, between whom and all phenomena is a necessary relation, in whom, however, is found the cause of those relations which he sustains to the universe. The explanation of all existence is in him, but he is not explained by any and all existence. Irrespective of God and his self-manifestation is no existence; he alone is Ground and Cause of all that exists; the finite world has a relative independence, yet all that is offered to intelligence is comprehended in the unity of the divine self-consciousness. This is the only Absolute with which theology is concerned.

God's conquest and mastery of the soul is the deepest proof that he is the Absolute One. Since only one Unconditioned is possible to thought, it follows that the rational evidence for the unity of God is the same as the evidence for the reality of God. As Spirit, God is and must be one, the unity of all differences. Since the characteristic of the religious consciousness is that of unconditioned dependence and obligation, and this is possible only with reference to one unconditioned and independent Being, it is evident that God is not to be described as one of a species,—one among many like himself,—but he is in his person unique and incomparable. “To whom will ye liken me?”

The eternity of God means that he is free from the limits of temporal succession, not in the sense that he could reverse the temporal operation of causes or the relation of cause and effect, or that for him is no before and after; but he is himself the Ground and Cause out of which all changes proceed, the exhaust-

less principle of all succession among finite phenomena. Although God manifests himself only under conditions of time-succession, and indeed can only thus manifest himself, yet in this mode of self-disclosure, through the maintenance of his self-identity amidst all the changes of his own working, he reveals his eternity.¹

The doctrine of the Scriptures which is not explicitly stated is that while God makes himself known under conditions of time, yet he outlasts all the changes to which human life and the world are subject; any given instant, and indeed all past time, is but the partial manifestation of the possibilities of time which are inherent in the divine will. Thus the religious meaning of the eternity of God is voiced in the words of the Psalmist, where man's frailty and transiency are set over against the endurance of the being of God. We fail and pass away, the world also changes; but God abides, the same from age to age—our refuge in all generations. His love is without beginning and without end; his promises unfailing and sure; his providence perpetual; his mercy from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him.

¹ God's "eternity means merely the completeness of his experience." Royce, *Studies of Good and Evil*, p. 26. Eternity in God is "the continual and immutable aim with which his will is directed towards his purpose." Ritschl, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

III

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THE WORLD

AMONG the Hebrews the idea of creation cleared itself first through faith in the God of Israel as the Creator of his people, who had elevated them above the physical world in their national destiny to a position of superiority to all opposition, whether of men or of the world; the implication of this faith was the origination of the world in God. The New Testament adds to the above that in the Logos, the self-revealing principle of God, the world has its unity, its rational explanation, and its final aim.

For Christian thought, the ultimate doctrine of creation is drawn not from philosophy, but from religion. The interpretation of Christian experience discloses God as the Ground and Cause of the spiritual ideal in man, as Cause and Ground also of the consciousness in which that ideal emerges; and since the moral and spiritual life is the highest reality known to us, and this owes its origin to the Spirit of God, it is a postulate of faith that the world in which this life is developed, and which is a rational unity with it, has likewise its cause in God. The interest of the Christian man in this subject is concerned essentially with a true idea of the relation of God to the world. The ultimate question is not that of a beginning of the world, or of the temporal priority of God to the world, but that of the eternal causal ground of the world in God. In

such a position the doctrine of creation is not surrendered, but for the first time rightly stated.

As we enter upon the discussion of the relation of the world to God in virtue of which all things and beings tend to realize the divine ideals, we are at the threshold met by two opposing views. According to one, God is regarded as working by second causes. According to the other, God is directly active in every phenomenon, and every force is a mode of the one eternal divine Force. With reference to both of these positions, we have to observe that if Deism is the besetting sin of the first, Pantheism crouches at the door of the second. We reach a safe and tenable ground only when we affirm, even if we are unable to offer a complete philosophical defense of the same, that although every phenomenon is a manifestation of the power of God, yet every phenomenon is also a relatively independent existence. On such ground alone can one make firm assertions concerning God, the world, and man with his freedom and immortality.

The divine providence is manifested in two spheres—the natural world and human history. In both spheres is discernible the same method of activity, yet this receives a different interpretation, according as it appears in nature or among men.

The providence of God in the natural world was the theme of frequent noble songs of praise by the great poets of Israel. In token of this are certain splendid passages in the Book of Job, as, for instance, chapters xxxviii–xli, and in the Psalms, as civ and cxlvii. God's care for his world and the creatures in it has never been celebrated in a nobler manner than here. With these men, as with Jesus and Paul, God's provision

for every single thing in the natural order is an argument from the less to the greater for trust in the Father for the needs of the spirit. This provision was particular and universal, going back to the very foundation of the world, and taking no account of intermediate agencies. God sends forth his springs into the valleys, gives drink to every beast of the field, causes grass to grow for cattle; young lions seek their meat from him; "Thou renewest the face of the ground;" he "looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the mountains, and they smoke." As one turns a second time, however, he discovers deeply embedded in the very structure of the thought of these men a principle of continuity as applied to the divine care of the creation. There is a relation between the mountain springs and the thirst of the wild beasts: the grass grows but for cattle; the earth brings forth food for man. Thus there is in the divine providence a gradation of lower and higher, of means and ends. And even where, as in the case of Job, the law of this relationship is not wholly plain, — the relation of the goodness of God to the suffering of man, — faith will not cease to assert its presence. It is true, the men of Israel had no such knowledge of the natural world as enabled them to discover from the world itself a principle of unity; yet this mattered not, their principle of unity was God. Their theory of the earth in relation to other worlds, and indeed to man, was naïve to the point of simplicity, including many indefensible notions of the relation of natural phenomena to man, having also many points of identity with the beliefs which centuries later formed the background of Dante's immortal poem. Yet even though they shared

the beliefs of their age concerning the framework of divine providence, they were eternally right in the proportionate emphasis they laid on the relation of the world to man and of man to God.

What was withheld from them, however, has become a commonplace of modern thought. Evolution is the method of providence in the natural world. If we would ascertain the order of that providence, we have but to behold the revelations of paleontology, of embryology, of comparative anatomy, of rudimentary organs, and of occasional abnormal reversions. There are indeed gaps between several of the orders of existence, but he who would know how God satisfies the desires of every living thing, has only to read the history of the development of life on this globe: the ascending orders of life bear witness to an immanent teleology. There is first of all a well-defined structural plan according to which organic life develops, which may be traced from lowest to highest forms. Then there are to be observed slight variations of descendants from ancestors, due in part to heredity, and in part to reaction upon influence from environment. The only explanation of this development through all lower forms of life on to self-consciousness is will; yet the will in the lowest orders is not self-conscious, and even in man is only partially self-conscious. The aim toward which, in the ascending series, development tends is indeed not foreseen and hence not consciously intended, and yet, with whatever lack of purposeful will and in spite of hindering environment, this aim is realized even by the most rudimentary organisms, ever according to their rank in the series. The rational explanation of this fact is that there is an immanent

Will, which embraces in its purposes both the organisms and the activities by which the aim is reached. Thus the earlier notion of the universe as dominated by an atomistic, mechanical view gives place to that of an organic relation of one portion of the creation to the rest of it, and of an orderly progression of the whole, culminating in man and his rational, social development. Our religious interest in the world remains unaffected by the change. Under the new as under the ancient view, "the glory of the Lord endureth for ever," and "the Lord rejoices in his works."

The other sphere in which providence is manifested is that of human history. Here too the law is that of evolution. Human society is a development from lower to higher, from simpler to more complex relations. In the beginning of the human race, those capacities which have since unfolded into such richness of relations were active in a scarcely differentiated form: the family, the church, the state, and the manifold social relations which even now are imperfectly defined, had not then come fully to the birth. Again, the beginnings were rudimentary, so rudimentary, indeed, that from the primitive conditions one could not predict the forms in which the later social development would be realized. Further, every stage of social advance is in part interpreted and in part limited by preceding conditions. Still further, this principle of purpose gives to history its unity and its movement toward an end. Finally, the proof of providence lies just here, that history bears witness to a teleological development, the consummation of which is the kingdom of God.

From these considerations it follows first that the providence of God is as real and essential in earlier,

that is, in prehistoric, as in latest stages and most complex stretches of human development. Again, we have no justification for distinguishing between secular and sacred, extra-Christian and Christian history, on the ground that each is characterized by a radically different relation to the divine good-will. Once more, every period of human development, every phase of religious belief and of collective striving after social order, great movements in art and literature, in science and philosophy, industrial activity, and indeed all efforts to make actual the imperishable creative ideals of the spirit, are within the scope of the divine providence. In particular, a true doctrine of providence forbids our claiming the Biblical history as history of divine providence in any such sense as would lessen our appreciation of providence as seen in Hindu or Egyptian or Greek history. Neither Hebrew nor ecclesiastical history has a monopoly of providence. The history of Israel is unique, but not in such a sense as would exclude profound influences from every nation with which it came in contact in its long development. No impression could be less grounded in fact than that which saw in it a hermit nation, isolated from all other peoples, receiving its truths, its laws, and its customs, like the traditional manna, directly from heaven. He who "made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" is no such Being that in order to love one he must hate another, that he must in virtue of showing one people a distinctive favor withdraw his goodness from all the rest. He is a Father, the Father of all men. Of two views, only one is defensible: either we must widen the scope of providence in human life, so as to include all the spheres of development

or else renounce a belief in it altogether. If one were in doubt which to choose, in case his conception of the Fatherhood of God were not decisive, then a comparative study of religions would remove the last vestige of uncertainty.

Thus the principle of providence furnishes the key for a number of questions hitherto perplexing. One is concerning religion itself. It is evident that all religions had one and the same ultimate beginning in the human consciousness, that this original religious consciousness has developed differently at different periods and among different peoples, and that the form of religious belief, together with the customs which flow from it, is most worthy of acceptance which has progressed farthest in spiritual unfolding. Hence we have to adopt a new point of view for considering historic religions. These can no longer be classified as true and false, some on one side containing all the truth, while the rest are destitute of it. No religion is wholly false. If one considers all the forms of religion, in their actual, social manifestation, as including all the ideas which have been associated with them at any given time, then it must be confessed that no religion down to the present time has appeared in a perfect form. If Christianity is the absolute religion in virtue of its revelation of perfect love, then all other religions must be not wholly condemned, but estimated in comparison with it.

This principle offers also the right point of view for judging of revelation. The fact that God is active with reference to men constitutes revelation. From the earliest dawn of human consciousness until the present moment, this divine activity has been univer-

sal and unceasing. Jesus taught his disciples to see in the constancy and impartiality of the Father's gifts to men an unmistakable token of the Father's character. But this sign has never been wanting to any living soul. Moreover, Jesus presents no distinction between the providence and the revelation of God. In his conception, God is revealed in his providence. Revelation thus follows the universal laws of God's care for men. In its beginnings it is with difficulty to be distinguished from the crude ideas and feelings of men; it becomes clearer with the unfolding of their consciousness; but it is at every stage adjusted to the measure of their receptivity. Precisely in this adjustment lies one of the strongest evidences that it is revelation.

A third question is connected with redemption. Here also our horizon undergoes a marvelous enlargement. Instead of a narrow country as the sole theatre and a few thousand years as the exclusive period of redemption, — a view which has haunted wide circles of theology, — we must go back to the teachings of the New Testament. "God has not left himself without witness among any people." "He was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world." All God's goodness is one, and its tendency is toward gratitude, repentance, and obedience in man. All God's light is one, and its purpose is to lead men to him who is Light. We cannot, therefore, draw a line of demarcation between providence and redemption — one partial, the other universal. All God's providence in human history is redemptive.

To the question, whether one can know the purpose of God without at the same time having a complete

understanding of the mode of its manifestation, the reply is plain, provided we only recall to ourselves how belief in providence has persisted through different, even mutually exclusive and contradictory theories as to the methods of its realization. Whether we hold to immediate divine activity, or to the notion of second causes which are in themselves substantial because "planted out" by the Creator, or to evolution as the form through which the purpose of God comes to manifestation, or even if this theory be hereafter exchanged for yet another more tenable hypothesis, still through all alike there will abide faith in God as the Almighty One to whose wisdom and power man may safely commit his way. This is referred to, not to discredit attempts to reach the *rationale* of trust in God's providence, that is, as to the mode of his working, but to guard against identification of faith with any scientific or philosophical hypothesis as to the precise nature of God's action in the world. On the other hand, such attempts are not to be discouraged. Only he will discourage them who himself distrusts the adequacy of the rational principle in man to discern in the phenomenal world the law of the divine activity. This does not mean that one can "find out the Almighty unto perfection." But for him who believes that man was made in the divine image, and that his nature is a microcosm, an epitome of the physical and moral order of the world, it will always be possible to cherish the hope that some time the moral, that is, the rational meaning of God's providence will stand revealed to human apprehension. "Surely the Lord Jehovah will do nothing, except he reveal his secret unto his servants" (Amos iii, 7).

The distinction of general and special providence, as commonly presented, relates general providence to God's supervision over all events, and special providence to his care over each person in relation to all. Or special providence may designate that activity of God by which he strengthens for the overcoming of temptation, leads out of perplexity, or comforts in sorrow. For practical religious purposes such a distinction may be helpful. Two dangers, however, lurk in it. First, it is beset by an undue subjectivism: one makes his own feelings the test of the divine action. The other danger is a fallacy which arises in part from the feeling that God cares more for the things which seem to us great in comparison with minor things in which we are less interested, in part from an unreasoned notion that the two are in their very nature different, and in part from applying a standard of measurement which does injustice to the reality of things. Its corrective lies in that view of the world which regards it not as a mechanical collocation of elements, but as an organic unity of related parts, and in conceiving God's relation to the world as personal. Nature is an organism. The characteristics of an organism are unity, that is, pervasion by a common principle throughout, and development according to a purposive, rational ideal. Thus there is dependence of each part of the universe upon every other part, the prevalence of a universal law of gravity, continuous transformation of cause and effect by which the past lives in the present, structural resemblances which reveal a principle of identity in all living forms, and teleological lines along which all living forces move toward their distant aim; these all point to an

indwelling life and mind in which the infinite phenomena of the universe have their ground and cause. In an organism, as the Apostle long ago pointed out, the ordinary discrimination between important and unimportant or less important elements is deceptive and invalid. "Nay, much rather those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary."

If all the activities of the natural world have a personal source, then every single one expresses thought and rational will, purpose, and love. Every one has reference to ends which are present to the divine mind. From this point of view, it cannot be said that in experience one event more truly than another is the expression of the will of God. The whole of life, and not simply a portion of it; death, no less than life; joy, and also sorrow; the noble plan which failed as well as the noble plan which succeeded, — all are in the hand of God, and all are equally embraced in the care of him who neither slumbers nor sleeps, who not only keeps the soul, but also one's going out and one's coming in, from this time forth and for evermore.

" Not on the vulgar mass
 Called 'work,' must sentence pass,
 Things done, that took the eye and had the price ;

 But all, the world's coarse thumb
 And finger failed to plumb,

 That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount.

 All I could never be
 All, men ignored in me,
 This, was I worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped." ¹

¹ *Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

In addition to the subjects already discussed, there are others which come within the providential order — suffering, sacrifice, and death. (1) Suffering is a condition to which all sentient life is liable. In man its seat is partly in the physical and partly in the spiritual nature. Its origin may be referred to a number of causes. It is involved in the transition from the non-moral to the moral order; the ascent to nobility from the condition of nature is impossible without suffering. In the passage from the natural to the spiritual, from nature to personality, are mistakes, discords, disappointments, pain, and the victor bears the scars of conflict. Suffering is also bound up with the connection of the physical and the moral orders; what occurs in the physical order without man's fault and against his will, casts its shadow athwart the peace and joy of the spirit. Further, the social unity into which man is born, into the manifold relations of which he freely enters, carries the implication of suffering. The "solidarity" of the race, whether through heredity or through social sympathy, involves each in the common lot. And inasmuch as the divine law is social, and self-identification of the one with the many is the ideal, the necessity of suffering, in a world constituted as our world is, follows as the inevitable consequence of human brotherhood. Moreover, suffering is related to sin, some effects of which are found in the body and others in the soul, the issues of which are not confined to the individual, but flow out to the community, and there spread their ruinous influence, and entail upon succeeding generations their disastrous results. Thus the innocent suffer with and for the guilty.

Suffering is not, however, the last word of God to men ; it presents another aspect, a brighter side. Here its chief significance lies in the evidence it affords that the vocation of God has become the law and spirit of life. The more completely one identifies himself with the divine calling, the more also he becomes united with his fellow-men, taking upon himself the feeling of their infirmities, their limitations, their mistakes, in a word, the whole circle of burdens and sorrows within which they move : suffering becomes vicarious. Thus it is the proof of fidelity to the Christian vocation, and to faithful servants it will never be wholly wanting. From God's question to Cain, "Where is thy brother?" on to the Evangelist's testimony to Jesus, "Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases," the lesson of the divine providential government is one. Finally, suffering is the means of personal perfection. It is the pathway to glory. Only those who suffer with and in behalf of men share with Christ the heritage of the heavenly blessedness.

(2) The principle of sacrifice is wrought into the very constitution of the world. It is manifested in every sphere and in all grades of nature ; rocks, plants, animals, all obey the same law ; nothing exists for itself alone, but for "the living whole." It conditions the very existence of society : the family, social institutions, the state, all are inconceivable without it. The necessity of sacrifice is threefold. (1) Only by following the law of sacrifice does the personal life come to completion. There is no purely individual development, nor has the individual alone any permanent ethical interests apart from his fellow-men. He that would save his life by isolating it from others loses it. Every-

thing which interferes with the highest interests of the personal life, whether in respect of the individual self or of society, must be readjusted to the whole of life. (2) If the person exists not for himself alone, but also for others, then in the normal relations of men under the divine government life must be passed with reference to this law. Here again sacrifice is inevitable. Its occasion is found in the well-being of the family, the church, or the state. (3) In the abnormal relations of society, especially as caused by sin, in order to nullify the effect of evil and to restore the unity of broken relationships, there is a particular demand for utmost self-giving; some personal force must be introduced sufficiently powerful to counteract the baneful influences of unrighteousness, by awakening within men a longing for the ethical and spiritual life. Inasmuch as all unrighteousness is the denial of love, only a mightier love can overcome it. But the inmost nature and manifestation of love is sacrifice. On this principle rests the stability and glory of the government of God. He who accepts the divine vocation hears the call to a life of sacrifice, and this becomes ever more complete and painful — but also blessed — in proportion as he identifies himself with evil-doers, arrests the evil within them, and leads them back to God. Such sacrifice is vicarious, and in it lies the principle of freeing from sin.

(3) We may study death as the dissolution of a special form of organic existence, as an accidental event either premature or violent, or as an experience inevitable indeed, yet connected with associations which but for sin would not have existed. If we regard it from the ethical point of view, it is either a state of

relative insensibility to the highest good, or a voluntary process in which merely individual good is renounced for the sake of a larger life both of the person and of the race as a whole.

According to an early form of representation in the Scriptures, man through obedience could have escaped death. On the other hand, Paul conceived of the "natural" man, that is, the man as dominated by impulses and lower desires, as the first to be actualized; whether such a one would become spiritual depended solely on the man himself. Through sin he lost the initiative of becoming spiritual, the capacity of which was restored in Christ. In Paul's view, immortality is bound up with the spirit. Even if he thought of some who might be free from the necessity of dying, — their bodies undergoing transformation into spiritual organisms, — yet this hope applied only to those persons who were found alive at the near coming of Christ. Hence, even if he supposed such a thing was naturally possible to all, this was to be experienced actually by only a few.

This is not, however, the only teaching of the Scriptures on this subject. In Genesis it is said that although in the day when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit they were to die, yet instead of suffering physical death, they were expelled from the garden, from happy, innocent life in harmony with God, henceforth with the world to suffer the consequences of their sin. For them these consequences meant not the death of the body, but entrance upon a condition whence emerged toil, sorrow, discord, isolation from God, and all the evils of this present existence. The physical life is itself described as naturally mortal: "Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground." Later,

in the same narrative, God is represented as reminding him that he was to return to the ground ; “ for out of it wast thou taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” An echo of this pathetic testimony to man’s real nature is heard in the stately burial service : “ Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” Paul holds, moreover, that man’s physical nature is not immortal. “ Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” According to the New Testament, not physical death, but the fear of it, is removed by the gospel.

For all the higher forms of organized being physical death is inevitable. The process which appears as growth, developing into maturity, issues in a gradual weakening of vitality, and terminates in dissolution. It is indeed the law of all existences. Transitoriness, passing from one form to another, disappearing here in order to appear elsewhere or in another phase, marks all stages of the finite. It is no less true of the mote on the sunbeam and the worlds of space than of the simplest, most rudimentary living organisms. This belongs to man and animals alike. Regarded merely as a cessation of a physical mode of existence, it is not, on the one hand, caused by sin, nor, on the other, removed by redemption. Viewed in this light, it cannot be regarded as an evil, but in the economy of God ministers in many ways to fuller life. The mystery of death is, in one aspect of it, the mystery of immortality. Man alone, of all the forms of life, possesses the power given by God to rise out of and above this constant flux of time and to enter upon “ the indissoluble life.” This he does, not by despising the things of time, but by discovering within them the unchanging and eternal, and in aspiration and hope allying himself with

this. To him whose body is worn out with disease or with age, or tormented with agonizing pain, death is welcomed as release; to one who longs to be with Christ, it is accepted as a transition to a better world.

The question of untimely or violent death is one of grave difficulty. So far as the Scriptures associate this with sin, sometimes as brought upon himself by the sinner and sometimes as the consequence of the evil actions of others, the principle of the divine providence is not far to seek; it is found in the law of the natural consequences of events and the solidarity of human relationships. There is, however, another way through which death comes, through sickness, or pestilence, or accident, which, although capable of scientific explanation, yet as related to free personality, to human affection, and to the moral government of God, is of profound concern. In this relation, such events are to be accepted as ultimate realities of providential government, for which the human mind can offer no complete solution, save as it refers them in faith to the "Judge of all the earth."

The relation of death to sin is not that of effect to cause, but of ethical association. If we cannot accept the bare metaphysics of the later teaching of Judaism on this subject, yet we shall see in Paul's view a profound fact of experience. Because of sin, death has acquired a significance which does not belong to it as a stage in the process of life. With the development of conscience, the cumulative divine judgments on sin reach their visible limits and draw together to a focus in the fact of death; besides, death introduces the personality into a condition far removed from the sunny earth and its joys. Hence the fear of the consequences

of sin which projects its anxious forebodings into a single burning point, in the separation of soul and body, and sin becomes the "sting of death."

A further aspect of death remains for consideration — an ethical principle, in obedience to which lies the realization of the highest personal good. The watchword of a modern school of ethical teaching, "Die to live," is the restatement of a law which found its perfect realization in the life and death of Christ. The love which gives itself in life will, if need be, pour itself out even in death. And this death, instead of being an arrest or waste or overthrow of life, calls out life's mightiest energy and is occasion for its supreme manifestation. For the individual, "death is swallowed up in victory," and in those for whom the life is given there spring up a new principle and power of life, to continue in ever widening circles the spirit of that which was surrendered for their benefit. Such a self-surrender to death may be a final necessary step in fidelity to the divine vocation.

IV

MAN

THE nature of man is partly defined by his relation to the world and to lower orders of existence. We cannot set him apart in an order by himself, as if he were a wholly unique being on the earth. So far as experience shows, man is the outcome of the "cosmic process." In his physical organism he gathers up the lines of development in lower forms of life and brings these to an end. He belongs to a family of animals which comprehends many species. In him culminate the instinctive sensitivity, the imperfect strivings, of all lower orders of being, issuing in self-conscious rationality and will. He thus shares with the lower animals his physical nature, having the same material constituents, the same chemical processes, the same impulses and appetites and living functions, is like them member of a race with racial characteristics, subject like them to a law of growth, endurance, suffering, and death.

Man is distinguished from the lower animals by the degree of his self-conscious life through which he is elevated to headship over the world, by the content of his social relations, and by the emergence within him of the idea of God. While the animal has no permanent existence, and no enduring ideal except that which is implicit in the development of life as not self-conscious, man, on the other hand, is inter-

préted not only as the crown of creation, but as member of a race which completes itself in the endless perfection of the individual, in the infinite richness of social relations, and in fellowship with God.

Man's right to lordship over the creation lies in his capacity for dominion, based on his superiority to the rest of the creation. He alone of all is fitted to discover the laws under which life perfects itself, and thus the uses and relations wherein many of the higher species of plants and animals attain a fuller measure of self-realization. So far concerning the created capacity: the actual dominion, leadership of the whole world to the highest ends to be attained, is possible only by self-mastery, and the degree to which man realizes his own highest ends. Neither the world apart from man, nor man apart from the world reaches the divine destination, but each is essential to the highest development of the other. If man turns his back on his upward course, he drags some part of nature with him down to the point reached in his self-degradation. To this the Apostle refers in his description of the present world in Romans viii, 22, 23, — an echo of the condition described in Genesis iii.

The nature of man is further partly defined by his relation to his fellow-men. The individual is not an isolated unit, but is part of a larger whole. He sustains four relations to society. (1) Through heredity he stands midway in a series of living beings, where, on the one hand, he has received a constitution, — the product of the physical and mental characteristics of an age-long ancestry, in which certain national and family traits are most conspicuous, — and where, on the other hand, he has to transmit to those who follow

him the same constitution, still further modified by the peculiar qualities of his personal life.

(2) He is born of a particular family, among a particular people, at a particular moment in their development, with a definite relation to the entire historical life of the race, into a distinct type of language, into a distinct circle of ideas, traditions, education, occupations, civil law, political institutions, religious customs, and ideals; in a word, into a social environment.

(3) So far as by his own volition he enters society as an "ethical organization of individuals," he allies himself by free activity with its institutions and forces, whether good or evil, impressing upon these somewhat of his own personal character and force. This includes his entire ethical reaction upon his environment, and as his environment determines the form, so his reaction upon his environment determines the quality of his growth, his position, and his tasks.

(4) Finally, man is not atomistic, nor is mankind simply an aggregation of individuals. No individual is physically or psychically complete. Social instincts, affections, and sympathies point to a race-connection. We are inevitably involved in the common lot of suffering as well as in the common inheritance of good. The end of ethical action is also common good; moral progress of the individual is inseparable from the moral progress of humanity as a whole; the true self is accordingly realized only in and through society.

Man's nature is in part defined by his relation to God. He is in the image of God. This is not simply his created, sensuous constitution, nor merely something additional to his sensuous and psychical nature, conferred by supernatural communication, and so in-

herent; but it is a capacity of self-conscious freedom, in virtue of which he realizes the end of his being. The divine image in the "first man" was not an ethical condition; nor can the Scriptures be cited for such a claim, not even Genesis i, 26, 31. Holiness is not innate, and it is not entirely a divine gift. It is no more possible to create a man holy than it is to create him wise. If it be alleged that by his very endowment of rational capacity the movements of his nature must be spiritual, that is, Godward, then it is to be replied that such a view is without warrant either in the Scriptures, or science, or psychology. The Apostle Paul declares that the first manifestations of human life are not "spiritual" but "natural," — rising out of the animal impulses and instincts, — and afterward "that which is spiritual." There is no reason for believing that the infancy of the race differed at all in principle from the infancy of the individual now, so far as concerns the order of development. The farther back into the past we are guided by the torch of science, the clearer it becomes that the beginnings of the race are marked by closest affinities with the order of life from which man emerged. The testimony of science is not that man, even savage man, is a degeneration from a primeval condition of human perfection, but rather that in the advance of the race in the upward path there was among nature-peoples an arrested development, in which, apart from influences from without, they at present remain. The primeval condition of man was normal, so far as it emerged out of no background in which sin existed — normal as a beginning, yet not normal as an end. Previous to the development of moral character, the natural powers of man were pleas-

ing to God. If, as embryology teaches, man is in his birth a recapitulation of lower orders of life, if he passes through the various stages of existence from the lowest to the highest orders of animal development, and these lower forms of life are pleasing to God ; if, moreover, there appears in the human consciousness a wholly new natural element, or better, a higher unfolding of that which was more or less implicit in these lower forms, then it is not difficult to see that a special excellence belongs to the nature of man. This excellence was not moral, but purely natural. He had the sensations and appetites, the capacities and desires, which characterize animals, and in him these were strong and assertive, necessarily far in excess of the — at that time — rational consciousness. But with these was a tendency towards the ideal which was destined to outrun the attainment of any living organism upon earth. The secret of his future lay wrapped up in the issue of the inevitable conflict between the lower and the higher, the life of sense and the life of spirit, which has marked the entire progress of civilization.

The consciousness of man was not then, nor has it been since, a *tabula rasa*. The very nature of life is energy and movement, and that which is innate tends to express and assert itself. Every appetite, impulse, and aspiration born with one contains within itself an implicit ideal of attainment. One may, if he will, begin to realize his higher self — the ideal personality ; he may, on the other hand, follow the animal nature, or his nature so far as it centres in an individual self. The way is open to either course. But neither the lower nor the higher can become the principle of a human life, save as it issues out of conflict in the triumphant

assertion of one set of desires and aims over against the conscious claims of the other. Thus no moral quality appears previous to choice. No choice is, however, possible until the alternate begins to appear, albeit in the simplest and most rudimentary forms, within the human consciousness. If the lengthening of the period of helpless infancy in mankind as compared with animals was the necessary condition for the development of the physical life and of moral sentiments, then in the reciprocal relations of parents and children is already implicit the principle which is to develop into religion, the social order, and personal virtue. Thus we see that one law holds good of all the stages of man's history, — holy character emerges in the subjection, or rather in the penetration and control, of the entire nature by the rational principle of man.

This capacity to realize the higher ideal constitutes the distinction of man from all other animals. He has risen to the divine type of life. His supreme designation is that he is capacious of God. He was created with a view to the emergence within his consciousness of the self-revealing and self-communicating principle of the divine nature. For him, as was taught by Paul, by the Gospel of John, and by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Logos revealed in Christ is principle and end. The relation is one not consciously assumed by human choice, but radical, essential, organic, and unceasing. It is Aristotle's dictum that what is first in principle comes last in appearance. According to this principle, the nature of man which attains its perfect flower only in Jesus Christ, and in each man only in the measure of his realizing the Christ-type of humanity, is grounded in the same divine life. This is

the secret of the deep cry of the Psalmist, repeated in every age : " As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God " (Ps. xlii, 1, 2) ; also of that other cry : " Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thy hand upon me " (Ps. cxxxix, 5). Later, Augustine voiced the same sentiment : " Thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee." So long as man is man, this property can never be lost. It may seem to be lost, where, as in the case of the prodigal son, the Father is for a time forgotten ; but even when one appears to have fallen to a stage scarce higher than that of the brute, yet the capacity may awaken, assert itself in the darkened consciousness of sin, and start the soul homeward to the Father's love. Although in a sense independent, yet he realizes his freedom not at once nor independently of God, but gradually and in harmony with him. Through increasing rational apprehension, free surrender, and appropriation of the divine, he becomes partaker of the life of God. Through the aid of the Spirit of God in the long process of divine discipline, he decides for the good, unifies the powers of his nature, and thus enters upon the indissoluble life.

The question whether man is capable of a perfect life is a fair one, and is worthy of consideration. That the earlier answers to this question were inadequate will awaken no surprise. The position of Augustine, for instance, and even that of the Scholastics, is no longer tenable. It is, however, a fact that no human being ever realizes his ideal. By some, this defect is attributed to the influence of sin ; and it must be

admitted that the effects of sin have been and are universal and of a serious character. Yet the entire cause of a man's failure to attain his ideal is not to be laid at the door of sin. Nor is it, as among the Greeks, rightly attributed to the necessary evil which inheres in all earthly things. The occasion in which sin took its rise in human experience was, according to the explanation of Genesis, due in part to ignorance, in part to susceptibility, and in part to an undisciplined will. Sin can do no more than intensify these qualities; it cannot create this condition. So long and so far as ignorance of the highest good, susceptibility to one-sided satisfaction, and a character not yet perfected remain, mistakes are certain to occur. Man cannot escape from himself. He is endowed with the instinct of perfection, and the capacity, that is, the impulse, for striving after it; but this is not to be reached in a straight line of development. The perfect ideal emerges only in connection with the development of personality — always indeed outrunning, but never fully detached from, the actual human life. Mistakes are, therefore, inevitable. But they are not necessarily sins. They become sin only when their incompatibility with the ideal of the will of God is seen, consented to, and adopted as a form of personal will. This is the capricious or arbitrary element in human action. It is an attempt to bring things to pass in a way which is inconsistent with their nature. But such action is never necessary.

The spiritual man is the end of human history (1 Cor. xv, 45). As the whole process of evolution with which we are concerned culminates in man, so man moves toward the life of the spirit. Through

space and time, through finiteness and imprisonment in the order of the world, through dependence and necessity of suffering and of becoming, he realizes freedom, blessedness, and eternity. Being rational and shaping conduct according to ethical and spiritual ideals, he finds his ultimate end in identification with the life of God. The actual attainment of this end, so far as man is concerned, is conditioned upon the relation of the will to the ethical and spiritual ideal.

Two questions, therefore, require consideration: the freedom of the will, and the effect of choice upon character. We direct attention first to the will. If we define the will as the principle of self-realization, then will in man is the principle of the realization of the highest self, and it is the final stage in the development of this power in organic beings.

In all of the lowest orders of life there is observed an active tendency toward an end — a principle which is true not alone of animals, but also of plants and the myriads of forms of existence in the sea. It organizes the structure according to a given type, it seeks light, it pushes out for food, it adjusts itself to environment, it propagates its particular species after a law of its own. This activity is not yet self-conscious, nor is there consciousness of the end; but in its sensitivity within the organism, in its appropriation of what is necessary to its own life, in its directive energy, in its impulse to propagate itself so as to continue its life in other forms like itself, we behold the raw material out of which self-consciousness and perception of an end will unfold.

A second and higher stage in the development of this same power is seen in many, especially higher,

forms of animal life — an inner tendency, to be described as desire for an object or for an activity more or less clearly perceived. This is true only of those animals which have a certain degree of developed intelligence in the will. In these beings, all that striving after ideal ends which characterized the orders below them persists, and reveals its presence in fuller possibilities, in increased capacities of adjustment to environment, and in a far richer content of consciousness.

A third and final stage of this active tendency of life meets us as self-conscious will, determining itself with reference to ideal ends — the characteristic of man as a self-conscious being. This rational will is, however, only a further development of the two other forms of activity, as seen in the lower orders of existence. This is man's distinctive quality and constitutes the secret of his personality. The child is born, not with this rational will in actual, complete exercise, but as a potency, to be educed in the discipline of life. The two other forms of active tendency are never here below completely absorbed into the rational will. The essential features of nutrition and reproduction still persist in him in a form scarcely different from that of the most rudimentary orders of being. In his appetencies and desires and sensations he never rises wholly above a radical sameness with animals. It is his distinction that that which emerged last in the evolutionary process — the rational will — penetrates, judges, disciplines, and humanizes the lower activities. In different men this power appears in different degrees; in some it is scarcely perceptible, the lower appetites and desires usurping its place, while in the highest personalities it is only partially

successful; accordingly self-consciousness is incomplete. It has, however, two functions: first, that of rational interpretation of all the facts which come within the circle of individual experience; and, secondly, the unifying of these interpretations in an ordered system of personal relationships. Nothing is more common in experience than the defeats suffered in the constant attempts to bring all human facts into rational order in the unity of personal consciousness. Yet with all his defeats, the actual accomplishments in this line are an unmistakable token that man is highest in the scale of created beings, and that he is destined to ever more complete personality.

The end towards which this activity is directed may be variously described, according as it is regarded from one or other point of view. Considered as life, it is fullness and perfection of life according to type; considered as a self, the end is self-realization; with reference to the species to which it belongs, since no individual is complete in himself, it is such a relation to other individuals of the same species that it may contribute to the progress of the whole; viewed as ideal, the end is that in which each individual as member of a family of the same order finds free play for every human power according to its rank in the scale of rational values. In the purely religious relation, the catechism has declared that the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever; which, being interpreted, means that since man is made in the image of God, he can realize himself only according to a divine ideal in a life of love, and that in such a life there is supreme and endless felicity.

In man the rational will is susceptible of two defi-

nitions, each of which is concerned with a partial aspect of the reality; and both are necessary in order to a complete notion. We may regard the will as an original, inalienable capacity for the realization of the true self. This may be designated in the language of the schools as "formal" freedom. It means that in every one is an innate and ineradicable tendency to develop his being with reference to ideal ends—a tendency to bring to perfection every human power. This is the personal principle in man. This personal principle is awakened but not created by environment; it cannot develop apart from an environment. The ideal is immanent in every human consciousness. This native capacity, being destitute of everything save possibility, is only the undeveloped nature of man, and hence cannot in its undeveloped state give him blessedness; yet without it, he would not be man; and only in its realization will his true nature and blessedness appear (1 Jno. iii, 2). But bare though it is, it is real, it is ours, it is prophetic, and its meaning will become ever clearer. Amidst the warring words of those who defend and of those who deny free will, the conviction endures undisturbed in the heart of both alike, and of all men everywhere, that one is able to withdraw himself from any and every state of consciousness, to determine himself in view of a principle of action, to pursue a purpose or to obey a law, in a word, to act in a rational manner and with reference to ideal ends or the will of God.

The rational will, moreover, exists so far as one is actually realizing his true ideal self. In every man there are two selves—the first, a present self, embracing a given circle of interests and activities, but

always partial and at best only a fragmentary representation of what one ought to be, and secondly, an ideal self, the possible future personality, of which one may be more or less conscious as an object of longing desire. In the present self some capacities are active, others repressed; even in the noblest life the nature is not wholly free. True freedom is an achievement. One is free so far as any activity is rightly directed and does not hinder the proper expression of any other power, be it appetite, desire, judgment, or choice. This aspect of will may be designated as "real" in distinction from "formal" freedom. The progressive realization of freedom is to the same extent the realization of personality. This is the New Testament idea of freedom (Jno. viii, 31-36; cf. 2 Cor. iii, 17, 18), and is the complete meaning of the term "image of God."

In considering the relation of will to character, we have first to gain a notion of the forms of will. These may be roughly described in terms of earlier psychologists as immanent choice, subordinate volitions, and occasional divergence of action. Immanent choice is characterized as follows: (1) It can take only two possible directions, one of which is enjoined, the other condemned, by the conscience. (2) If good, it has respect to the end of action and the highest good. (3) It is the main source of conduct, and defines the character. (4) Its essence, when rightly directed, is that of moral love. (5) It may exist with or without subordinate volition. This has also been designated as immanent preference, supreme choice, and governing purpose. It is the principle of unity in character and action. Subordinate volitions are sufficiently

described when it is said that they spring out of and express the immanent choice, hence have an element of necessity. They are only secondary indexes of character. Their aim is a particular form of the supreme good.

The nature of occasional divergence from the supreme choice is plain from the name itself. Such an act does not indeed set aside the supreme choice, yet it appears as a surprise in moral character. Until the rational will attains complete supremacy in character, such divergence will come up. We are, in a measure, responsible for it, and we need to guard against it. Its appearance may even raise a question as to the reality of a supposed supreme choice.

The facts of experience to which these statements refer need, however, a somewhat more thorough analysis. Such an analysis reveals the moral will in man not as a finished product, but as in a formative stage. The nature of man is always undergoing development. Powers of every description are pushing forward for recognition and adoption by the consciousness. All these powers and capacities cannot at any given moment be equally prominent. In the ideal order all are subordinate to the highest end, each power and capacity according to its relation to that end. If the reason is the directing, then the rational will is the unifying principle in the nature. Without its insight and restraint, the other powers—instinctive, affectional, and æsthetic—fall into irreconcilable conflict. Owing in part to the relation of the spiritual to the physical nature, in part to lack of discipline, in part to ethical causes, personal self-control is imperfect; it is either inconstant, or else directed to other than

the highest ends. The law of unity may, however, centre in a higher or a lower power, and all the other powers tend to follow that one which is chosen for preëminence. What has been called an immanent choice is, therefore, at any given time, the prevailing direction of personal activity, and subordinate volitions are particular forms of this prevailing activity. But since a perfectly formed will is a thing unknown in experience, — all wills are in the process of making, — what are called “divergences” belong to the as yet only partially or imperfectly disciplined personal forces. Instead of moral discord awakening surprise, it should rather create astonishment if such a fact were not to appear in the development of the personality. Typical instances of the law to which we refer are the two aspects in the character of Jacob and Simon Peter ; a striking literary example is seen in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. In the increasing discipline of all the powers of one’s being under the law of Christ unity becomes ever more real and manifest. This unity is Christian character.

V

SIN

IN order to make the idea of sin real to ourselves, we shall have to break it up into the several aspects in which it is presented in concrete acts. Thus it may be considered from the rational, the ethical or ideal, the social, or the religious point of view. It has also a relation to the individual nature and character in which it appears. Taking up these specifications in the order named, we begin by inquiring what sin is in relation to the reason of man.

(1) It has been affirmed that no completely rational account of sin is possible, since sin is in part irrational. If, however, this is the case, then it contains a dark, impenetrable element. Only that is intelligible which is itself the product of intelligence. But no sin can be conceived of apart from intelligence in the act. Sin is, indeed, irrational, in the sense that the act in which sin appears is, so far as it is sinful, a refusal to be guided by the whole circle of rational ends. Analysis of every concrete act reveals various motives and ends. The relation of man to the rational order of the world is such that no act is possible which does not aim at some particular form of good. This good may, however, conflict with other ends or means which in themselves or in their particular relation cannot receive rational approval. We may here advert to a distinction between motive and intention, where

motive is related to that which presents itself as a good, but which in its execution may involve various evils from which one would gladly be free ; yet the two are so connected in the present relation of the individual to his environment, that if he will have the desired end, he must also include in his purpose the undesirable concomitants. In a perfectly rational act, however complex, there would be no conflict between the elements involved in motive and intention. But in every sinful act such a conflict is immanent and inevitable. At the same time, we see that there is present a good — a good created by God. This may be established by referring to the temptation in the garden. “ When she saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.” We cannot even conceive of one choosing an end in which there was absolutely nothing that presented itself as a good. One may indeed be mistaken as to the means selected to secure the end, and he may associate with that end many guilty wishes ; but so far as the end appears to him a good, its appeal is to his rational nature. Only the insane man proposes an utterly irrational act. Thus we see that sin is so far explicable.

A further analysis reveals the presence of a supposed good, even in the most hateful forms of sin. The malicious tale-bearer, the drunkard in the last stages of his degradation, the thief who stops not short of murder, the assassin, and the poisoner, — each is attracted by that which seems a good to him. We are now concerned neither with the perversions of the judgment, nor with the depravity of the desires. It is

enough at this point to have indicated the rational element in the sinful act.

(2) Sin, regarded from the ethical or ideal point of view, is a willful rejection of the ideal, so far as this emerges in consciousness. We have seen that man has an ideal-forming capacity, whose activity is determined in part by the prevailing bent of his character, and in part by the involuntary operation of his nature. Thus to some extent he shapes his own ideals, and to some extent these are expression of an inalienable divine gift. The ideal is not an external reality, an abstract ethical imperative, but is the form in which the moral law is present in consciousness. It is not, however, to be referred simply to man's nature, — God alone is its ground and source. Every choice is related to two selves: an actual self which is the cause of the choice, and an ideal self which is more or less represented in the choice. From the relation of these elements of the personality to each other, one discovers two reasons why man does not realize his ideal. (a) By its very nature the ideal is in part transcendent, and is thus impossible of realization at any given time or in any definite act. Portions of the ideal pass into actuality, but the ideal itself is a flying goal. The ideal, however, as ideal, is forever incapable of realization. Were it actualized, it would by that fact cease to be the ideal. Yet from this point of view, in the discrepancy between the ideal and the actual, so far as this is necessary, there originates not the sense of guilt, but only surprise, or disappointment, or despair. (b) When we sin, we deliberately reject a portion of the ideal and substitute therefor immoral ends; or we are aware of clamorous passions or desires, by which we are balked

in a true purpose. There is the law of which Paul speaks, — the “law of my members, warring against the law of my mind ;” so that “not what I would, that do I practice ; but what I hate, that I do.” “The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh ; for these are contrary the one to the other ; that ye may not do the things that ye would.” No small part of the pain experienced by the sinner as a result of his sin is the stinging sense of mortification and defeat. This is the meaning of those vivid designations of sin which reveal as by lightning flash the psychological reaction of the sinner, so often found in the Scriptures — “missing the mark,” “not attaining the goal,” “emptiness.”

(3) There is also a social aspect of sin ; it is indeed probable that this is the form in which sin first appeared in the human consciousness. There are certain ideal conditions without which society cannot be constituted. This is not to say that man cannot exist in society unless all that is involved in his nature has come to its perfection. It signifies rather that for each stage of development there are ideal conditions which for the next following stages are only in part ideal. There are many types of organized community-life ; but what would be normal for a lower type would be abnormal for a higher one. And there are certain general conditions which are more or less pervasive and persistent. Since, therefore, man is a social being, and it is less a matter of choice than of necessity that every one is in constant and most complicated relations with his fellow-men, and since the personal ideal is impossible of realization apart from the common life of all, it is evident that any evil done by a particular person

must pertain to his relations with others, and thus involve others with him in his condition. In any age when individualism is the keynote of personality, this aspect of sin becomes obscured ; but when, as at the present time, the common consciousness of men asserts itself and forces them to feel the solidarity of mankind, this feature of sin starts into special prominence. There are sins which can only be called social sins. If one considers the acts involved in the second table of the Ten Words, — honor of parents, murder, adultery, theft, false witness, covetousness, — he can frame no notion of these with the social element omitted. The chief count in the indictment against the Pharisees was the social aspect of their sin. More and more the social question is felt to be at heart a religious question. The fact that the churches are addressing themselves to life in this world as well as the next, and are dealing with men as members of society, thus aiming at social regeneration, is another indication that sin is social. Paul exhorted Christians to refrain from lying, on the ground that they were members one of another. The question is even raised in some quarters, whether sin has any other than a social character. It is owing to the social nature of sin that an act may be approved in an earlier social condition or in a particular association of men which in another age or with a different environment would be sin. There are also actions involving sins which can be performed only by groups of persons ; the choice of each is individual, but the deed is a collective one, and cannot be conceived of as enacted by a solitary agent.

(4) In relation to God, sin is essentially alienation from him. John defines it as a willful rejection of law

(1 Jno. iii, 4). The *Westminster Catechism* teaches that "sin is any want of conformity unto or transgression of the law of God."

We have to distinguish in sin a formal and a material element. There is no bare sin in the relation of the soul to God; every sin against him is expressed in some deed, in some relation to earthly goods, — the use of one's powers, the way in which one holds one's self towards the material world, and one's attitude and activity with reference to one's fellow-men. The foundation of this principle is seen in the fact that just as one cannot lead a holy life irrespective of the world and its ordered system of forces and laws, so every act of sin is inseparably bound to some relation of man to his own nature and environment. Even the monastic recluse, so far as motivated by the hope that the convent will render a holy life easier in virtue of complete withdrawal from the world, learns to his surprise that the world follows and presses in through every window of his cloistered seclusion and through every one of his five senses, comes to life again in memory, and loses no whit of its attractiveness because no longer present by actual contact, but only in vivid imagination. Whether or not sin is an infinite reality is not now under consideration. But even if it were infinite, its mode is limited to finite form.

We do not, however, reach the heart of sin until we uncover its deeper principle — alienation from God. In this respect the Psalmist was infallibly right; whatever the form of the sin, it is not merely this which stings with its remorseful memory: but — "against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight" (Ps. li, 4). Nor is it less

sin even when not consciously directed against God. No sin so infallibly aroused the moral indignation of Jesus as deeds of inhumanity, nor will any surprises of moral self-revelation equal those which may overtake men who are inconsiderate or heartless toward their fellow-men. The conduct of the priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan, and of the "nations" described in Matthew xxv, 31-46, has the most immediate relation to God, although these men are all unaware that "the Lord is in this place."

In whatever form sin appears, it is in reality an attempt to annul the ideal order in which man is placed, and to substitute therefor an irrational and hence impossible condition. Since God is the ground and cause of all that is, sin is an effort to annul his relation to the world and even his existence itself. Since God is the moral Governor of men, sin is an endeavor to abolish his authority as source of obligation. Since he is the Father and Redeemer of men, sin is directed to the eradication of the divine grace from the sphere of human interests. It may assume as many phases as there are ethical and spiritual relations, — avarice, appetite, pride, hatred, lawlessness, unbelief, ungodliness, an unfilial spirit; or, viewed as action, it may be described as missing the mark, distortion, rebellion, making tumult, transgression, not attaining the goal; or, as a deed done, emptiness, evil deed, debt; while if regarded from the person from whom it springs, sin is an evil principle. But whatever its form, in all alike its character is determined by the relation of the rational soul to God. This and this alone constitutes any act or attitude of the soul sin.

(5) Sin has also a relation to the nature and char-

acter of the individual. As action, sin first emerges in consciousness as sin in the feeling of opposition to the divine. It is an expression in part of voluntary denial of the divine claims, and in part of the potential evil inherent in human nature. Antecedents of sin in the individual are : (1) The environment into which he is born, already fitted with conditions adapted to pervert or to defeat the ethical and spiritual life ; (2) the nature in which sin originates as the seat of forces which from their relative strength tend to corrupt the person ; and (3) temptations, on the one hand taking their form from the environment, and on the other appealing to a favoring disposition inciting to alienation from God.

The cause of sin is, however, to be sought neither in God nor in matter. Even if we assume depravity, whether as universal, that is, total, or only in part, yet this does not account for sin : in total depravity is no power of choice of good ; and in partial depravity is no causal relation to choice. On the supposition of indeterminism, no reason can be assigned why any person follows in the track of his progenitors. Evil environment does not explain sin, for environment does not necessitate a particular kind of action. There are in human nature various forms of impulse — impulses limited to the isolated self, and impulses limited to this self and the world ; if life is organized according to either of these forms apart from God, it falls short of the highest ideal, and hence is sinful. One may follow or subdue the animal nature — become flesh or spirit ; one may obey or turn against the law of social well-being — pursue a social or selfish ideal. When, therefore, any natural or lower tendency asserts

itself against an increasing ethical and religious consciousness, in which appears the opposition of actual and ideal, of volition and obligation, of the present self simply in any relation over against God, sin arises. In man's endowment for the realization of the ideal lies also the possibility of its non-realization; yet without the destruction of personality, this possibility is not to be annulled, nor can God otherwise prevent sin.

The natural history of sin shows that it arises as conscious opposition to God. The essential steps to it are plain. To see what these are, we may refer to the narrative in Genesis. It begins by the instilling of a question, through deliberation this passes into the stage of doubt, and this doubt, with which is associated the partial good in the evil aim, introduces a stage of confusion in which the good emerges no longer simply as good, but in connection with evil, then appears a desire for the good which means a higher vantage-ground of existence and attainment, and finally the self is consciously identified with the good, at the same time that the evil is reluctantly accepted as an inevitable concomitant. At this stage, the process of thought is arrested, obligation to God is dropped out of account, and a course of action is entered upon which brings up consequences not foreseen, or consequences which, if foreseen, had gradually passed out of sight, but now return with new faces.

This course is, however, marked by very distinct resistance and excuses. From without is positive law, or from within the moral nature there rises the feeling of antagonism; the proposed act finds resistance from the side either of the will of God or of the conscience. In any case, one feels that his freedom is

restrained. He may then trace out afresh the whole question of the ground of obligation in the particular case under consideration ; for all sin has its origin in concrete relations. Thus he may persuade himself not indeed that he will dishonor the authority of God, but only that he may have misunderstood the import of the divine command. He may go so far as to question the goodness of God, thus accusing God of envy in withholding from him the prerogative of becoming God-like in independence and freedom ; or at least holding that God has created him with a nature the gratification of which is denied. Or he may claim that God has put him into relations which are not ideal and do not call for ideal action on his part. In any case, there is a conscious breaking away from innocence and his natural relation to God into a condition of self-originated opposition to God and thus of separation from him. The inner psychological experience of sin as depicted in the third chapter of Genesis discloses every essential element which marks for humanity the beginnings of sin. Further acquaintance with the laws of the human mind, the relation of man to the natural world and to the social organism of which each individual forms a part, only furnishes new examples and applications of the truth of this ancient *saga* ; but in its ultimate principles it will remain the source and norm of every future study of human sin.

Sin originates in the individual life at a very early age. Every one who sins repeats in principle the catastrophe of the first sinner. That sin is the first moral act of every person is insusceptible of proof, and no *a priori* doctrine of depravity would justify

the assertion either that men are born sinners, or that they begin to sin as soon as they begin to act, or that the earliest responsible act is sinful. In many natures, through Christian nurture, it is not to be doubted that the first moral tendency of the spirit is right and good, and never thereafter suffers radical interruption. That which becomes sin may not infrequently be traced to its beginnings in innocent thoughtlessness; the child is a child because he is immature; the uncaring act becomes sin when, its wrong perceived, it is still cherished. It originates, also, in illusion; then it is fascination, and the anticipated results are distorted. In the unfolding spirit of the child, the transition from innocence to sinfulness may be scarcely perceptible to others, and never clearly registered in the consciousness; yet the principle is plain: sin begins in single acts, and the spirit in which these originate gradually organizes the personality according to its principle.

Here two grave mistakes in earlier treatments of this subject require attention. First, the serious injustice which has been done to the nature and spirit of children in the theories of sin which have largely ruled in the church. The injustice has indeed been unintentional; but the key to a true knowledge of the child's nature was wanting — possibly because fathers and not mothers have framed doctrines concerning those who had no voice for self-defense. The interest of a special theory of grace has also exerted a baneful influence. Yet the truth on this matter could be fully known only through the disclosures connected with heredity and the psychology of the child.

The other mistake has been in supposing that a first

sin involved a degree of moral enlightenment and of the operation of conscience which is possible only to one of mature years. If it be remembered that the will is in process of formation, then the first moral acts are such as belong to the beginnings of personality. Here the relation of God to the immature being is not juristic but biological ; God is the Father of this child. Moreover, if " first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear," is the law of the beginning and development of moral character in the kingdom of heaven, then no other principle must be allowed in the case of the evil.

Among the many theories proposed in explanation of the origin of sin, one only, on account of the strength and subtlety of its presentation, requires consideration. It is claimed that " in the process of spiritual evolution evil needs to be present," and also " evanescent." ¹ In advocacy of this position, it is urged that the knowledge of evil is indispensable to the knowledge of good. The very recognition of the morally good is thus made absolutely dependent on the knowledge of the morally evil. Even a perfection undreamed of by any highest spirit might exist, but seen without its contrasted evil, its true nature would remain concealed. It is further argued that there could be no movement toward the realization of the perfect apart from struggle with what seems an evil environment. There is indeed a deadly warfare, and we who struggle suffer and perchance fall by the way. But virtue, since it cannot be created by omnipotence, is possible only through conflict. In this field man must be ultimately successful. Solicitations to debase-

¹ Fiske, *Through Nature to God*, pp. 54, 55.

ment from within and temptation to wrong-doing from without are essential conditions of character.

This is a position of great strength, and by reason of this fact it requires careful defining ; yet it harbors a dangerous fallacy, all the more dangerous since it is protected by the main argument. Three questions press for solution : Is sin as a fact of self-determination necessary ? Is sin an essential condition of spiritual evolution ? Is there in human experience apart from sin a condition adequate for the development of virtue ?

(1) To say that sin is necessary is to attempt to unite in a single proposition two elements which are forever irreconcilable. Either we must re-define sin, or else seek some meaning for the necessity of sin which does not belong to it by nature. A deed that is not free is not sin, although it may be evil. (2) Whether sin is essential to spiritual evolution will be answered in the negative by all who are convinced of the sinlessness of Jesus, and who yet hold to a growth in his character according to laws of human development. The question is not whether sin may not, on the one hand, furnish occasion for God to display a peculiar richness of grace, and, on the other hand, call man's attention to his own weakness, and so send him to God for help ; it is whether sin has an essential relation to the unfolding of character. Those who take the position under discussion are not understood to affirm that a necessity of this nature exists. (3) We are then pointed the way to a solution. The answer will fall into two parts. First, so far as we know the conditions of character in this world, we cannot conceive of virtue apart from temptation. Without

the opportunity and solicitation in respect of evil, human goodness is unimaginable. But temptation is not sin; the lower desires are not sin; nor do these arise necessarily from a background of sin. Secondly, in the realization of personality, the affirmation of the finite self as a reality over against the Infinite One is an inevitable moment. That such a self-affirmation may have a place in an evil choice is not to be denied. The distinction of the individual from God must emerge clearly in consciousness, before union of the soul with God can take place. One side is represented by the cry, "If it be possible, let this cup pass away from me!" The other side comes into prominence in the further cry, "Not what I will, but what thou wilt!" In this antithesis which asserts itself in the human heart in relation to God lies the condition for the deepest agony, the fiercest struggle, the most splendid victory, and the highest human virtue. When, however, the affirmation of the individual self, thus tending to become exclusive, is persisted in after it is seen to be opposed to the ideal of human life in relation to God, then and then only it becomes sin. We are, therefore, compelled to conclude that if in human life as God has planned it, in the conditions under which personality arises in connection with lower forms of existence and completes the union of the self-conscious spirit with the will of God, there is evil, yet this is not evil in which sin is a necessary element, but still evil which is the shadow of good; and this furnishes an adequate contrast to the morally good, so that both knowledge and virtue are possible to a sinless development.

Shall we consider the act in which sin originates as

a fall? Perhaps not in the full traditional sense of the term. That it contains already the principle of sin is not to be denied. All sin is to be traced to this one disposition. Can it, however, be claimed that the result of the entrance of sin into the world is that "we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good"?¹ In reply, three further questions must be raised. Is it true that we are "utterly indisposed . . . to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil"? Was the beginning of sin in any sense a "fall upward"? What are the actual consequences of sin?

(1) With reference to the first question, it would seem to be enough to refer to the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. There we are introduced to the experience of a man whose inner life had been a theatre of an intense moral conflict. On one side was arrayed a power which had been roused to the utmost pitch of opposition to the good; on the other side emerged an ideal of the good and the true with which this man would fain identify himself, which not only stood for the man he would be, but mightily moved him to the realization of this good. Although he felt that this inalienable, better part of him was always worsted in the fight, yet he never acquiesced in the defeat. His very cry of wretchedness was undeniable proof that the good, although cast down, was not slain. Nor would he ever confess irretrievable overthrow. It was this unconquerable longing for victory for his better self that led him at last to the Saviour, in whom he found his better self, through whom he could do all things. Were not his struggles, however, a witness that in his former state he was not "utterly

¹ *Westminster Confession*, chap. vi, 4.

indisposed . . . to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil " ?

The same position is reached from a consideration of heredity. If there is any truth whatever in this scientific doctrine, then the transmission of the characteristics of parentage cannot be limited to physical qualities, but must include also mental traits and moral tendencies ; and these last are not to be restricted to evil. The consequences of sin are sufficiently deplorable without exaggerating them.

(2) Can it be maintained that the beginning of sin was for the human race a fall upward ? Such an element has been found in it. Some have seen in this act the condition of all progress, on the ground that good is appreciated only in comparison with evil. Others, as Kant, have treated it as a transition from the slavery of instinctive appetites and desires of animal life to the control of reason, from inexperience and innocence to freedom. In any case, if the individual suffered on the awakening of reason, as indeed he did, yet for the race it was in part a transition from a worse to a better condition. With the advent of sin certain great distinctive properties of human nature for the first time begin to appear. Here emerges self-consciousness as a moral reality. Here too man separates himself from the rest of the creation in a relatively independent act — a clear gain. At the same time the social aspect of his being is disclosed to him with an emphasis which reveals an advance in his idea of himself as an integral part of an organic humanity. Now so far as the awakening to consciousness is in man associated with sin, it may be regarded in the first and in all successive generations as a fall, yet not in the

traditional sense. "A fall it might seem, . . . but in promise and potency a rise it really was."¹ We can, however, conceive of the realization of man's ideal destiny apart from the shadow of actual sin, even if we cannot do so apart from temptation. Whether man, being what he is in innocence, on the one hand heavily weighted with animal appetites, and also as we know with hereditary dispositions, and on the other hand with a principle of freedom to be developed in the use of fallible reason and an untrained will, could refrain from those acts in which sin appears, is a very different question. Sin is, however, never a phase of the ideal.

(3) The answer to the third query, as to the actual consequences of sin, will be considered with reference to the individual, to society, and to God.

These, so far as they affect the individual, are seen first of all in character. Single acts are the expression of character, and character is the enduring attitude of the self-conscious will. Sin may thus become a continuous, all-controlling principle of action. Character does not in this world attain to perfect unity, but the determination from which each act springs confirms resolution and tends to reduce purpose to a single aim. Conflict in the will may be of long duration, but it is improbable that it is to continue forever. There is also a perpetuation of sin in the secondary elements of character — in thought, disposition, and subconsciousness; actions originating in self-conscious choice pass at once beyond immediate control of self, become incorporated in the personal nature, and reveal their presence there in morally disordered capacities, thus

¹ Sir Oliver Lodge, *Hibbert Journal*, vol. iii, p. 330, "Mind and Matter."

furnishing incentives to further deterioration of character. This is in part the true nature of the "sin which dwelleth in me," "the law of sin which is in my members," of which the Apostle speaks. We are not able to separate the depravity with which we were born from that which results from our own sin; the two flow on in our nature, each indistinguishable from the other, and unite in their disturbing influence upon future choice. Nor is the effect of sin limited to the mental and moral nature; it sets up within the bodily organism special forms and intensities of abnormal action.

The natural tendency of sin is to develop in the line of least resistance. If the disposition to sin is but feebly resisted, then it does not remain at a standstill, but develops through activity in a favoring environment toward a complete denial of the ideal of man as rational spirit in the image of God — the sin against the Holy Spirit. If there are institutions and customs in the community which are sinful, then the soul may move more rapidly in the direction of complete hardening. Sin, however, reaches its highest development and assumes its most aggravated form only in opposition to the highest revelation of the good (2 Thess. ii, 1-10).

A further personal aspect of sin is guilt. This condition arises from the sinner's having put himself out of harmony with the moral order of the world, of society, of his own being; in a word, in his opposition to God. The wrong act, in addition to the other consequences of it, clings to the sinner, and abides in his choice and in his attitude toward God. He is answerable indeed, yet not so much for his act as for his

state. He is what he ought not to be. He could change if he so desired, — if he would, but he will not. So long as he remains what he is, in spite of anything which he may wish to the contrary, he is held within that circle of moral relations which he has by his choice freely entered; and he must experience those results, both natural and spiritual, which belong to his condition. This is his guilt. There may be guilt where the feeling of it is lacking. There can be no inherited guilt, nor can it be transferred; and it pertains not only to actual sins in which the consciousness of it becomes alive, but also to the state of the soul as sinful. No guilt attaches to the susceptibility or power of lower impulses until these are assented to in personal choice; only for their increase is one responsible. Thus guilt is grounded in the eternal relations of personal character to the ideal spiritual order — to God.

We have to mention as further consequences of sin in personal life certain reactions, one of which is natural, the other moral. The natural reaction is seen in a growth and intensifying of mental faculty used in particular sins, and a gradual apparent atrophy of those moral and spiritual powers of which little or no use is made. The exact correlation elsewhere observed between function and capacity holds true here (Rom. i, 28); on the one hand, development of a quickened activity within a circle of evil thoughts and sensibility, and on the other hand, a process which, if unchecked, leads to moral impotence, the power of resistance of the moral nature being practically exhausted. The moral reaction against sin is found in the pricking of conscience. This is not simply dissatisfaction or shame, but regret and remorse, a witness that violence has

been offered to the rational and spiritual nature — to God.

Sin may also involve the individual in false relations with the natural world. The physical world, constituted in truth and for righteousness, ultimately a manifestation of the same rational will that underlies the nature of man, reacts in physical forms against the realization of purposes which essentially contradict its order. This same law holds good likewise of mistakes through ignorance; but sin raises such relations to a principle of deliberate and continuous action, and seeks to establish within the natural order a permanent condition which that natural order irresistibly tends to bring to naught. Yet one cannot infallibly identify all natural evils with consequences of wrong-doing (Jno. ix, 3; Luke xiii, 2; see also Jno. v, 14; Gen. iii, 18, 19).

In view of man's relation to his fellow-men as a race or social unity, sin is not limited in its results to the individual, but extends beyond him to others. Here the results of sin appear in two forms: as heredity, and with reference to the social order.

(1) As to heredity. Each human being is constituted member of a race whose tendencies in any generation are determined in part by the past collective life of the race. So far as the nature becomes disordered through sin, it is transmitted according to laws of heredity, and thus enters into an ever wider circle of activity and influence. This is not to be interpreted as if such disorder were to increase from generation to generation by a sort of geometrical progression; for this tendency is constantly subject to counteracting influences of good, not less strongly operative. This

disorder may be traced back to the earliest historical man, and its human origin referred to the first sin. Its roots, however, run back into man's animal inheritance. That such so-called depravity exists, no one who knows his own heart will deny; on the contrary, he will affirm that within him are active impulses and appetites and desires and dispositions which are not of normal or ideal relation to the other powers of his personal life. No impulse or appetite or desire or disposition is in itself so radically wrong that extermination is the only remedy for it. Everything belonging to our nature in its fundamental qualities is part of the thought of God, and hence to be conserved. There is, however, distortion, excess, misdirection, defeat; and this exists in different degrees in different persons; but it is not sin. Sin presupposes responsibility, yet no person is responsible for innate depravity. Sin aggravates depravity, and depravity in turn aggravates temptation. Depravity is not impotence to good, else were there no sin previous to regeneration, nor does it necessitate sin. It leads to sin, but not in any causal way. It is an inclination. When this inclination is seen to be wrong in relation to the whole of life and thus to the will of God, and yet, notwithstanding this fact, is freely adopted in action, then and then only is it sin. Hence no one can be guilty of innate depravity. In this sense, man is not by nature a sinner.

It is only in a secondary sense that we can speak of man as possessing a sinful nature. Paul does indeed declare that we are "by nature children of wrath" (Eph. ii, 3). But this must not be so interpreted as to make the Apostle teach that all men are by inherited constitution objects of divine wrath; this would be

irreconcilable with the context and the rest of his message. The context shows that the nature here referred to is the evil character acquired through following out the "desires of the flesh and the mind;" elsewhere, with great explicitness, he teaches that the "Gentiles . . . do by nature the things of the law" (Rom. ii, 14). The Jews were "according to nature branches" of the divine commonwealth (Rom. xi, 21). The Apostle in Romans vii, 23, refers to a law in his members, which warred against the law of his rational nature — an evidence, not of unity, but of duality in his moral consciousness; in his flesh was no good thing, but he was not all flesh. In him dwelt also a will to good and a delight in the law of God. If he found himself a slave to the flesh, yet this was from no law of necessity, since this would annul sin itself. No bondage ever became a fact which was not accompanied by a conflict of the lower and the higher in man. Were ideal freedom alien to human nature, then bondage were impossible. We know beyond all peradventure that hindrances to good do not arise from a finite natural constitution, but are incidental and temporary, and will finally disappear in the development of the soul according to the divine ideal. Thus will the disproportion of natural appetites and passions and the moral disorder tending to sin ultimately disappear.

A further consequence of sin appears in the social order. Society, the ideal of which is the well-being of all its members, realizes its aim through the principle of unfolding rational adjustment in love. Through social unity of tradition, education, and personal influence, special forms and incitements to sin are perpetuated; also through the relations of social unity all men

share the lot of common suffering, so far as this is due to sin, and the suffering makes itself felt through human sympathy. Moreover, all sin is by its very nature directed against the true social order, and the social reaction is manifested in various forms, partly as conscious and voluntary in unappeasable opposition to all forces which are aimed at its existence and security, partly by this very opposition stimulating groups of evil into intenser activity, and finally, according to a law of social evolution, which, while it renders evil more subtle, yet by compelling it to defend itself and come into the light, makes its success always more difficult and its ultimate defeat certain.

The great consequence of sin, before which all other results pale into insignificance, is that of increasing alienation from God. It is manifest in one of two ways, either as conscious resistance to God, or as unconscious forgetfulness of him. Thus there may be growing opposition to the grace of God, or a gradual lessening of sensibility to the divine goodness. In both cases the result is loss,—loss of fellowship with God and all that this stands for in relation to forgiveness of sins and inward peace; loss of inspiration to good, and all that belongs with this in the unfolding of human capacity in righteousness and noble service of others; loss of power to realize the ideal; in a word, loss of blessedness and eternal life. This loss may be estimated in terms of God as the highest good, or of God as Father. If God is the highest good, as the religious aspirations of our nature indicate, the human self-realization advances in the degree to which one shares the life of God; this is life, eternal life, life according to the type to which man belongs. On the

other hand, so far as one departs from God, that which is divine in his nature is ignored and suffers waste, and he fills his soul with interests which can neither satisfy his spiritual nature, nor raise him to the place in ideal development for which his powers are fitted. The tendency of sin is to dehumanize man.

To understand, then, the full effect of sin, we must interpret it in terms of man's relation to God as Father. This means that it must be set in the light of infinite love. Life attains its perfection and blessedness in love. But sin is the denial of love. It is impossible to deny love without at the same time denying that which is best in man's nature, and developing in the soul dispositions which tend to degrade the activities of one's being. If love is the principle of unity in man's life, then its rejection must introduce a deep disharmony both in individual character and in social relations. What man is capable of in the denial of love may be suggested but not fully disclosed in the deep cunning of hypocrisy, the heartlessness of covetousness, the embittered sting of malice, and not least, in some of the more abandoned forms of sensuality.

VI

IDENTIFICATION OF CHRIST WITH MEN : I. THE PERSON OF CHRIST

SIN is not the end of the ways of God with men. Alienation from God, social disharmony, and self-destruction may be the law of sin, but God does not leave men to this fate ; he proposes instead reconciliation with himself, social reunion, and the perfection of the individual. He proclaims himself with ever increasing clearness, "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth, keeping lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" (Ex. xxxiv, 6, 7). The mystery of God's purpose for sinful men which lay partly concealed within the divine mind, and was partly revealed in his gracious treatment of Israel, at last breaks open even to its inmost centre, and discloses an eternal will of redemption as wide as human history (Eph. iii, 9-11).

Since the manifestation of Christ is an eternal purpose of God, we should expect that it would be not an isolated fact, but already, before his coming, prepared for in the constitution and history of the world. This is according to a law of universal significance. Revelation is two-sided : on the one side, the infinite riches of God, on the other side, a deep human susceptibility ; but neither of these is adequate to redemption

apart from the other. God will make himself known, but this self-manifestation depends on man's apprehension; while man's apprehension, beginning at the lowest point of knowledge, must pass through all the stages of awakened sensitivity in a gradually widening series of apperceptions. Man is indeed *capax dei*, but the capacity must be developed in the only way possible — through a historical process. In considering preparation for Christ, we must guard against a too common error, that of fixing the exact day and hour when the world was ready for its Saviour. Whereas what we can affirm is only a general preparedness, a condition which extends over a longer or shorter period. Undoubtedly, in the sight of God, there is a precise moment when the "time is fulfilled;" but for us, it is only true that some time within a given period the conditions are maturing which provide for the coming of the Son of man. Yet even with such an admission, how much is, to human sight, left unprepared! Whatever preparation appears is found both outside of and within the Hebrew nation.

Outside of Israel, the preparation for Christianity is shown in two forms, the one general, the other particular. The general preparation is disclosed in the universal development of the religious principle in man. The religions of the world are a witness to the long process of God's education of the human race to an apprehension of the spiritual element in life and in the universe. The history of man prophesied with growing clearness of a time when God would reveal himself more fully and at length perfectly. In particular, there were two limited spheres of preparation. One of these was Greece. Here art, literature, and philosophy

had run out their course. Nowhere else had these received a development which could exert so mighty an influence on the highest thought of succeeding generations. Still, those who would gain inspiration from these unequalled attainments of human genius turn back with inexhaustible interest to the Parthenon and the Theatre, to the Academy and the Porch. Pantheism, which shivered itself into so many brilliant but fleeting forms, attained in the worship of Greece unparalleled beauty and perfection. But the power which had animated all these manifestations of the spirit had exhausted its capacity for further unfoldment. Its golden age had come and gone ; it was

“ Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born.”¹

And yet Greece had not lived in vain. For first, the unifying conquests of Alexander and the consequent spread of Greek culture and ideas wielded an influence second only to that of Christianity, without which Christianity would have met with a very different reception. The Greek tongue itself provided an incomparable medium for conveying the contents of the gospel to the world. Rome, a feebler copy of the Greek order which she displaced by her genius of dominion, organized a stable system of government throughout the world, and thus furnished highways along which the messengers of the cross might go in the proclamation of the new Way. Later, indeed, the church was to feel from both the Greek and the Roman, from both philosophy and the organizing principle of law, the vitality and power of those realities in human life which had coöperated in the preparation for Christ's

¹ *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse.*

coming. But even so, the blessing was greater than the curse.

Among the Hebrews the preparation for Christ took on several forms. In the first place, Israel was certainly characterized by a monotheistic tendency. We do not now inquire how this tendency was trained, nor whether there were lapses from it, and how these were corrected in the historical unfolding of this people. If every other people has developed according to the genius of its peculiar constitution and environment, there is no reason why we should refuse the same law to Israel. In the exigencies of national life it was brought to recognize, with a clearness never again to be dimmed, the fact of one living and true God. This was indeed the first prerequisite of a religion as taught by Jesus: God is a Spirit. Whether or not a practical monotheistic belief is to be affirmed of the earliest leaders of the Hebrew people, and possibly of certain ones of other races most closely allied to them in language and religious worship, in any event, the Hebrews alone of all peoples arrived at a conception of God from which sprang the perfected religion of redemption. Thus there was developed in Israel the idea of God as an ethically immanent and transcendent being, who was at once the source of obligation and the perfection of love.

As a preparation for Christ, the nation became further conscious of itself as a people chosen by God to become the medium for the realization of the divine purpose of grace. This passed through several stages, from the first call of the people out of bondage through the earliest rude beginnings of national consolidation, the growth of theocratic hopes ever more deeply com-

mingled with expectation of earthly supremacy, then gradual submergence of this expectation in the vicissitudes of successive conquests by hostile powers, and the final downfall of the last remnant of their external greatness — an hour of extremity which became God's opportunity.

There was also the feeling of estrangement caused by sin, and the longing for unbroken fellowship with God which was so characteristic of the prophetic spirits of Israel. This showed itself in many ways, but particularly in three: (1) in the growing consciousness that the true life was not external but within, a matter of the heart; (2) the sketches of the future, fragmentary indeed and with much to be filled in by the hand of history, yet glowing with a solid hope for a time not too far distant when God would pour out the overflowing measure of his blessings upon men; and (3) the development of the distinctive Messianic hope. This last element in the life of Israel passed through three stages before its deterioration began. (a) As representing God, and as means of attaining the divine purpose, the national vocation was felt to be concentrated in a king who was to lead the people to a position of exalted supremacy — a conception found in both earlier and later prophecy (2 Sam. vii, 14-16; Ps. ii, xlv, lxxii, cx; Is. vii, 14; ix, 6, 7; xi, 1-5). (b) The function of vicarious suffering appears only in later prophecy. Here we observe an advance in the idea of Israel's destiny: first, Israel is servant of Jehovah (Is. xli, 8, 9; xliii, 10; xliv, 1, 2); then, not Israel as a whole, but a remnant, the ideal Israel, is the servant of Jehovah (Is. xlii, 1-7; xlix, 1-6; l, 4-9); finally, ideal Israel is the "suffering servant" of

Jehovah (Is. lii, 13–liii, 12). (c) The Hebrew conception of its vocation is not completed until these two functions — the royal and the suffering — are combined. Israel is indeed called to a position of supremacy in mediating the revelation of the true God, but the condition in which alone it can realize this vocation is that of suffering.

Later additions of Jewish thought respecting God, man, the vocation of Israel, and the coming of the Messiah contribute little or nothing to the preparation for Christ, save as they illustrate the aridness of a purely speculative method in dealing with religious realities, the impossibility of a human hierarchy's keeping alive the spirit of faith in the living God, and at the same time show the necessity of a fresh manifestation of the divine in human history along the creative, that is, the redemptive lines of the prophets.

If now we ask, what was the relation of Christ to history, we shall not be surprised to find that, since God has chosen the historical method in unfolding the preparation for Christ's coming, the same law of historical development holds good in the case of Christ. Thus, he appeared in the "fullness of the time" (Gal. iv, 4). If, on the one hand, history has not the last word to say concerning the life of Christ, on the other hand, the key to its interpretation is to be found only in history. Even those who hold to a monistic development hypothesis, with all its implications, do not more fully feel the unity of Christ with the history of Israel and the race than did the writers of the New Testament. To convince ourselves of this fact, we have only to see how in the various books Christ is placed

with reference to history. For Matthew, the dominant purpose in Christ's life is the fulfilling of the Old Testament prophecies ; for Mark, Jesus appears preaching in Galilee, because the time was fulfilled, the necessary condition for his coming ended ; Luke knows of Jesus not only as the one of whom the prophets spoke, but also as that one whose genealogy was traced back through all the periods of men even to the divine origin of the first man ; for John, Christ is not alone the completion of Israel's history, but the illumining principle of all life ; for Peter, the spirit of Christ was already present and controlling in the Old Dispensation, and, as in the Acts of the Apostles, Christ was the divine outcome of the whole process of God's leading of his people ; in the Epistle to the Hebrews, prophecy before Christ was partial and preparatory to the perfect self-manifestation of God in his Son : thus Christ was the summing up and doing away with all sacred ceremonial and external sacrifice, not only of those who traced their lineage to Abraham, but of all mankind ; and finally, in Paul all the lines both of Jewish and of extra-Jewish history converge on Christ, the one through whom are all things, the shaping principle of history, and in whom all things and persons find their rational, redemptive goal.

From this position it follows, first, that the life of Christ had a truly human basis and quality ; secondly, that the growth of his consciousness was under conditions which have their explanation in history ; thirdly, at a definite moment his work enters the circle of the world's interests and will be subject to laws which prevail in individual and social development ; fourthly, his life was brought to an end by causes which are

accounted for in the spirit and institutions of his time, although the principle of his life was drawn from a sphere above time; and finally, the significance of his person and work will be gradually unfolded through the experience of those who become his followers, an interpretation which, while growing in apprehension of the truth, will not be protected from the errors and exaggerations which appear in other spheres of human knowledge. Within this person is, however, "an enduring principle of regeneration," which, set free from its particular Jewish environment, on the one hand, is capable of infinite expansion as it — a creative spiritual power — penetrates ever more completely the life of man, and, on the other hand, takes up all the intimations of the divine wherever found and lends to them new and higher meanings.

In the application of this principle that Christ was subject to history, we must not imprison him within the order with which history is alone concerned. It is a law of all those personalities who have formed the turning-points of human development, that if they are in part explicable as the children of their time, yet they also bring with them an element which is not accounted for by their time — a creative power characterized by a certain immediateness, spontaneity, and might which seems like a new incarnation of the divine. This creative power enters indeed into the common types of life, but it lifts these forms into a higher plane, introduces a more intense spiritual activity, and the race never again sinks back to the earlier level. Jesus shares with all the greatest personalities this quality. In addition to this consideration, the records attribute to Jesus properties and actions which are

not accounted for in the history of the time. There are such elements in his person, in his character, and in his works. The New Testament refers, for instance, to a pre-natal mode of existence which furnished the key to his earthly life, without which that earthly life would be insoluble. There is a relation of Christ to the Father which cannot be drawn within the category of time. In the character of Jesus is something which eludes the historical crucible and forbids his classification with empirical men. Moreover, the Gospels relate of him deeds which surpass all that history has recorded of man's power. There are works of mercy which enter the stream of human experience from a spring outside of it; while the supreme event of his manifestation — his reappearance to his down-cast disciples, re-awakening hope and creating the mighty enthusiasm of the early church through the abiding power of his spirit — originates in a sphere of being which history may take account of, but may not explore.

The demand for a consideration of the person and work of Christ springs from the relation of Christ to the Christian life, to Christianity, and to Christian doctrine.

As to the relation of Christ to the Christian life: Christ has from the very first presented himself not only as an object of supreme faith, but also as one who lives in his followers, the principle of a vital and transforming union. In him men have beheld the ideal of humanity, the spiritual realization of all that men can hope to become, and the unveiling of the inmost nature of God. Thus we have in him, if not the absolute origination, yet the first permanent organization, after the

highest ethical and spiritual law, of a new type of man ; and thus he is the creative power of a new social order. What he is to life, this he must be to thought. He who is himself the centre and source of every truth which concerns the moral nature of man has quickened the human reason to an insatiate thirst after reality, the product of which is the mighty and increasing intellectual ferment, the doctrinal controversies, the religious affirmations of the church. And still we are confronted by greater problems than any that have been solved, the key to which is found alone in Christ. It is, therefore, inevitable that in all ages the question starts forth afresh from the reason, "What think ye of Christ?" Fundamental to the relation of Christ to the Christian life is the Christian experience. One can understand neither the Christ of the Gospels nor the Christ of dogma, save as "Christ is formed within" the heart through a living experience of him as gracious Redeemer and Lord. Among all the facts in human history, Christian experience is perfectly distinct and recognizable. Nothing in the whole range of knowledge is more evident than the manifestation of the renewed life in human society, — reconciliation with God, comfort in sorrow, growing freedom from sin and evil, union and sympathy with fellow-men, — a movement of humanity toward the realization of the ideal. In this fact no less than in other facts, one has a right to find the expression of a cause. In explanation of this fact but one ultimate cause is assignable. That which shapes personality must be itself of the same nature. Life can come only from life, love from love. He who is source of all that is deepest and holiest in the human heart must be himself more than it, and

that which is characteristic of the heart as renewed must exist in him in inexhaustible degree. When, therefore, we construe the Christ of history and the Christ of dogma, we shall not be turned aside from giving its proper influence to the Christ whom we know no longer after the flesh or the pure reason, but after the spirit. In such light many an old familiar fact of the Gospel will glow with celestial meanings, and many a dogmatic teaching of the church will disclose a heart of living and transforming grace.

From the relation of Christ to Christianity the same need of penetrating to the significance of Christ is evident. For Christianity is what Christ is; to know him is to understand it. He is its formative principle, its inspiring power, its law of development, its ultimate consummation.

Moreover, a consideration of Christ in relation to Christian doctrine reveals the central position occupied in theology by his person and work. Here the influence of a doctrine of Christ which shall be true to the great lines of revelation and the past apprehension of the church is of superlative value. Christology is not indeed theology. A Christology, however, robbed of all those rich contents of humanity and Deity which have been cherished by the church, results in a theology destitute of either spiritual interest or commanding power.

Finally, many causes conspire to awaken interest in a fresh presentation of the meaning of Christ to-day. Creeds have lost their ancient authority. Impatient at metaphysics which has been fruitful in controversies, many are turning to an ethical conception of Christ. Man elevated to his rightful place as consubstantial

with God, in distinction from the Augustinian doctrine, is thought to have less need of a Mediator. Historical investigation, at work on the sources, has sought to explain what is peculiar to Christology by reference to Jewish Messianic ideas, on the one hand, and, on the other, by the influence of the Logos-doctrine of Alexandrian philosophy. Under the new criticism of the Scriptures, the historicity of the stories of the nativity in Matthew and Luke is placed in suspicion; many texts relied on to prove the divinity of Christ have moved away from their traditional moorings and drifted out of reach; while the method of interpretation has become ethical and religious rather than transcendental. No longer are scholars content to say, as did Moses Stuart, eighty years ago: "I abide by the simple declarations of the New Testament writers interpreted by the common laws of language." No doubt the Scriptures represent the exalted Christ as invested with attributes of divinity; but is his divinity essential and transcendent? Does it in any case necessitate eternal personal preëxistence? Many recent discussions dealing with such questions as those just referred to are not falling on the minds of scholars without starting new and deeper inquiries as to the Christ of history and the Christ of faith.¹

In the consideration of the person and work of Christ, we shall not limit our inquiry exclusively to the so-called historical Jesus, or to the living, that is, to the risen and glorified Christ, but shall seek to unite

¹ Cf. Wendt, *Teaching of Jesus*; Beyschlag, *New Testament Theology*; Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church*; Harnack, *History of Dogma*, and *What is Christianity?* Wernle, *The Beginnings of Christianity*, and *Die Quellen des Lebens Jesu*; Holtzmann, *Life of Jesus*; Bousset, *Was Wissen Wir von Jesus?*

in one view the Jesus of the Gospels and the Christ of the later writings of the New Testament. In the Jesus of the Gospels must indeed be found the principle by which all subsequent developments of the Christ-idea are to be compared and judged. The earthly life contains, however, only a portion of the revelation concerning him by which either the first community or later conceptions of the church have been determined. He whose pathway on earth, although radiant with "grace and truth," led, until the cross, into ever deeper self-humiliation, after death entered into an order of life from which he constantly advances to the consummation of the purpose of redemption. If we have an earthly Jesus who "hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," we have also "a great high priest who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, . . . henceforth expecting." It is our task to find the principle by which the "Christ after the flesh" and the Christ of the spirit may be presented in a living unity.

Nor will our investigation end here. There are intimations, not only of an exalted and glorified Son of God, but also of an eternal Logos in relation to God. We shall have, then, to seek for the significance of this intimation, and to find some category by which this may be brought into connection with creation and man and God.

We now enter upon the consideration of Jesus' earthly life as interpreted through his own consciousness. This discloses itself to us in two aspects — toward men, and toward God.

Concerning his relation to men, he himself felt that

this was in some ways unique; in it were involved identity with men and difference from men.

Taking up these in their order, we inquire first, What is the evidence and what the nature of his identity with men? The evidence is at the outset of a presumptive kind. When one appears with human form and human speech and associates with men in the intimate contact of daily life, we naturally require proof of a very cogent sort to convince us that such a one belongs to another order of being than man. Moreover, all the writers of the New Testament confirm this presumption. According to them, Jesus embodies in a degree never before equaled the qualities which belong to man as man.

In affirming this, one may make either of two impressions. On the one hand, attention may be directed to the pure finiteness and frailty characteristic of man. This idea lay in the thought of the Psalmist when he cried, "What is frail man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of the earth-born, that thou visitest him?" Here is beheld the pathetic side of human experience, in which bodily weakness, suffering, and death are felt as limiting conditions from which even the noblest are not exempt. On the other hand, human life has an ideal side. In spite of the natural and inevitable limitations which beset all human endeavor, there have been among all peoples and in every age those who have asserted the higher life of the spirit, who have striven to become that to which the higher capacities of their hearts prompted, and who thus have in greater or less degree transformed the possible into the actual. In many languages these two aspects of life are expressed by different words, one of which

describes what man is by nature, — true of all men, — and the other denotes what man may become by reason of personal achievement and glory of the spirit. When, therefore, we say that Jesus' life was identified with that of men, we do not mean simply that he was subject to the great common experiences, such as growth, hunger, weariness, pain, and death; this was indeed the case. But more than this was true. Although he was subject to these unavoidable limitations, yet by means of them he realized in an ever advancing degree the possibilities of his spirit. Thus, not by taking himself out of the natural conditions of man's life, but by fidelity to his vocation in the midst of them, he became Son of man, and according to the same law which holds good of all men, was made perfect through suffering.

If for confirmation of the foregoing we appeal to Christian experience, we find the positions firmly established. Concerning no person who ever lived has it been so true as concerning Jesus Christ that men have thought they found in him one who was purely and perfectly human. This is the meaning of those exhortations which point to Jesus as our example; it is exactly this identity of Jesus with men which has made possible the imitableness of his character. If, however, any part of this character were extra-human, in principle impossible to every other person, no such question could ever arise. In virtue of his sharing with us, the other children of God, in flesh and blood, he is our Elder Brother. He is also the one to whom men of every class and of every sort of need come for sympathy, in the belief that he can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Again, when Jesus is

called the "universal man," no other thing is intended than that he was what all men are in outward condition, and what all men ought to become in the inner life of the spirit.

This is the nature of Jesus' identity with men. He is man, not because all that is true of all actual men is also true of him, for this would also involve innocent mistake, moral perversity, and discrepancy of character from the ideal; but because he is all that is essential to the idea of man. The uniqueness of his identity with men lies just here: he was not less but more human than all other men. For the first and only time in human history he realized what it was to be completely and perfectly man.

This unique relation of Jesus to men has another side; it includes not only identity, but also difference from all other men. Judged by his own words, there is in him a unique quality by which he is distinguished from all others. This is manifest in all his relations with men. It appears in his teaching, since he places himself not only above all preceding teachers and leaders of Israel, and claims the right, so far as it may be necessary, to discard or correct or complete their message, but also above all those who hear or who are to come after him, requiring from them intellectual and moral assent. He has access to powers which are in like degree available to no other one, and he possesses a depth of knowledge disclosed to no one else, save as he himself reveals it. The assumption which underlies and declares itself in all his relations with men involves his uniqueness. In all his conversations and discourses he places his hearers on one side, while he stands alone on the other

side. They are lost sheep, he the Shepherd. They are servants, he the Master. They are sick, he the Physician. They are sinners, he alone the Holy One of God, the Saviour. They are from beneath, he from above. At every point where his ethical life touches men, he claims a supremacy next to the Father, shared by no other, never to be transcended, and never to cease.

It has been objected that such self-assertion is inconsistent with the humility which properly belongs to the Christ; it is, therefore, not to be referred to him, but to the unconscious addition of a later Christian feeling. This, however, misconceives the principle of Christ's attitude toward men. The origin of his claim lies in the consciousness of his own personal worth and the quality of his ministry for men; indeed, he would be untrue to himself and to his vocation, if he declined to make it. And it points the way to the nature of Christianity as a religion, not of ideas simply, but of personal relationships, a union of love and obedience with him who is both Saviour and Lord.

Nothing in history is clearer than that from the Apostolic time to the present, the uniqueness of Jesus has been one of the constituent elements of the Christian church. "His moral perfection seems to me his great peculiarity and separation from all human beings."¹ The most influential school of theology which has arisen since the Reformation, traced to such leaders as Schleiermacher and Bushnell and Ritschl, has had this for its distinctive note. The new passion for Christ which marks this generation has not failed to emphasize, together with the imitableness of Christ's

¹ Channing, *Memoirs*, vol. ii, p. 414.

character, another element in his personality, original, transcendent, and that easily outruns the noblest attempts at imitation.¹

If we seek to ascertain the nature of this unique quality in Jesus' person, we shall find it not in what is foreign, but in what is essential to man. When it is claimed that the character of Jesus forbids his possible classification with men, the abiding force of the argument will lie not in the contention that his qualities were superhuman, but that, although the same essential qualities were found in him as in other men, yet these are not found in them existing in the same degree of excellence—they transcend those seen in all other men. Not as if here were an absolutely new kind of virtue, or the revelation of a hitherto unheard-of grace, totally alien to humanity; but that which was essentially human he carried to the highest ethical and spiritual realization. What other men had been in imperfect, he was in perfect, degree. He was true and perfect man. Thus in his very oneness with men lies the principle of his distinction from them. And, on the other hand, this distinction was grounded not in difference but in identity of constitution.

The identity and difference of Jesus with reference to other men are therefore seen to be only different aspects of the same concrete reality; the difference is the identity realized and revealed in its perfect form.

The relation of Jesus to the Father is definitely expressed in the term, Son of God. This title as used in the New Testament has, however, several references. (1) It gets its meaning from the nature of his earthly origin as described by Matthew and Luke: this was due

¹ Cf. Harnack, *Christianity and History*.

to a creative act of the Spirit of God. Whatever of silence or of intimation concerning the relation of Jesus to Joseph characterizes the rest of the New Testament, in the first and third Gospels there is affirmed such participation of the Spirit of God in the birth of Jesus as is alleged of no one else. Thus, that which was to be born should be called "holy, the Son of God."

(2) The title "Son of God," although ultimately Messianic, is applied to him in the ethical sense. He is the beloved Son, ever well-pleasing to the Father (Mark i, 11). His meat is to do the Father's will, to finish the work intrusted to him by the Father. He alone fully knows the Father. The fact that he is Son is seen in his sinless perfection, in the immediateness and completeness of his knowledge of the Father, in the fullness of his ethical power, in his repose in God, in his sense of God dwelling in him, and in his mystical union with God. The perfect idea of Sonship is realized when the Son is like the Father, with the same ideals and principles of action. There is the most perfect sonship where one can with truth affirm, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." This ethical Sonship of Jesus is grounded in no mere foreknowledge or arbitrary choice on the part of God, but in likeness of character and aim with the heavenly Father. We are not to conceive of this Sonship as only a public relation which he sustains to the Father; it is first of all personal and private. There are in him depths and springs of thought and feeling which are known only to the Father. He knows that God perfectly loves him, and he on his part perfectly yields himself to the will of the Father. In this filial relation of Jesus is, on the one hand, the most characteristic quality of his per-

sonal life, and, on the other hand, the sole condition on which his vocation emerged in his consciousness as a call of God.

(3) Jesus is Son in the Messianic (official or theocratic) sense. Centring in this designation are three titles of Jesus, which are only different aspects of the same reality: the Messiah, the Son of man, and the Son of God.

First, then, Jesus is the Messiah. This title points backward to the anointed king of Israel (1 Sam. x, 1), and forward to the qualification of the future ideal king of the theocracy (Mark xiv, 61). Three distinct elements are to be found in this designation. He is the fulfiller of the royal hopes of Israel. Jesus is aware that all of Israel's religious strivings after God reach in himself their personal consummation, and that, therefore, he is called to lead his people to a participation in the life of God with which he is himself filled. Through him are to be mediated all those gifts of God which in earlier time had been associated with the ideal king of Israel. But more than this must be affirmed. There had risen before the eyes of the prophets a vision of the suffering servant, anointed to minister to man's need the forgiveness of sins and comfort from God. And Jesus announced himself the mediator of this grace. In evidence of this, he pointed to his gracious message, to his works of healing, to his intimate knowledge of the Father, and to the ethical dignity and rank of his person as compared with all who had preceded him, as well as to the future glory which was to shine forth from him in the kingdom of God.

As Messiah, he is also founder of the kingdom of God, destined to world-wide extension. The benign

sway of the heavenly Father, because it was a pure gift of God to men, like the sunlight which daily bathes the whole world in its life-giving good, can be confined to no race or privileged class, but is for all; and not only so, but through Jesus as head of this kingdom, the life and truth and love of God are to be communicated to humanity in the better world.

Still further, a condition of his supremacy as Messiah is suffering on behalf of his people. This means that he is to be exalted to Lordship, not by pure divine mandate, nor in virtue of an extraordinary self-assertion, but solely through identification with the lot of men, and through a superlative ministry to human need. Instead of receiving gifts or being served by men, as the kings of the earth were, he will be first simply because he is, to a degree unequaled by any other, the servant of all. He was anointed for service; through service alone comes moral sovereignty. Indeed, with the Christ service and sovereignty are one.

A second Messianic title by which Jesus is designated is Son of man. This title by which Jesus describes himself has a history. It appears in Daniel's vision of the kingdoms, the first four of which are representative of pure sub-human power, finally superseded by a kingdom in which the human comes to its rights. The other kingdoms were from below, this from heaven. The others were of brute force, this was spiritual. The symbols of the transient earthly kingdoms were drawn from the animal creation, the symbol of the everlasting kingdom was drawn from humanity — "one like unto a Son of man." This designation, "Son of man," appears later in the Book of Enoch, but it is uncertain whether the parts in which this expression is found

were pre- or post-Christian. In any case, Jesus took up this designation, thus domiciled, although perhaps dormant, in Jewish apocalyptic thought, and gave to it a new application. He discerned the possibilities which lay wrapped within it as a prophetic word. His kingdom was from above, spiritual, everlasting, a kingdom of God indeed, but also of man. In it for the first time the human takes its true place in the unfolding of God's purpose ; it reaches its divine destination not by means of brutal conquest, but by spiritual forces and laws. In Jesus' mouth this word was used in various connections, and it may be difficult to fix on the one central idea. The very difficulty has led to many interpretations, such as that he would describe his human nature by this title, that he was real man in distinction from being man in appearance only, or that as man nothing human was foreign to him ; or again, that as man his glory lay through suffering, or that he was the representative of mankind in whom the ideal of humanity was fully realized, or that he was the heavenly ideal man, or that the name expresses a "contrast between his lowliness and his greatness," or that the term referred to the lowliness and humility of his appearance. However, we shall not go far wrong if we see in this title an intimation that he was man, and yet upon him were conferred the highest prerogatives of the kingdom of God. This is evident if we look at two or three of the most important instances of the use of this term in the Gospels. "The Son of man hath not where to lay his head ; . . . hath power on earth to forgive sins ; . . . is Lord of the Sabbath ; . . . came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many ; . . . ye shall see the

Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." Thus two characteristics of this Son of man arrest attention. First, he was invested with authority to secure for men the blessings which the fatherly love of God would bestow upon them. The vocation was unique, conferring upon him a privilege and position of the highest rank in the kingdom of God. Secondly, the person to whom such prerogatives belonged was human, living under conditions of self-abnegation, of lowly service for others, and of unostentatious fidelity to the will of God. We cannot fail to be struck with the contrast between the lowly appearance and the exalted vocation, the weak bodily form and the mighty spiritual endowment, of this man. In one personality two elements are combined which have never before been perfectly united. In spite of human expectation, the kingdom of God is established not by the descent of some supramundane, extra-human being, clothed with powers beyond the reach of men, but by the coming forth among men of one who lives under human conditions and realizes in himself all that is possible to man. Here is spiritual sovereignty, moral omnipotence, supreme authority, attained by one who, because he used none of the weapons of earthly power, seemed impotent and finally crushed ; but just because he renounced all those means which had been employed by other great ones for the advancement of his aim, relying wholly on love for the law of his sway, he conquered most at the instant when he seemed most vanquished, and thus ascended a throne on which he can never be superseded. That he preferred the designation, Son of man, points to the fact that his vocation was not essentially bound up with those vulgar expectations

connected with the Messiah and his kingdom which had been a part of Jewish hope, and that he was at least conscious of being that one who, although a plain man, yet by the riches of his personal endowment and by the wealth of his service to others had been anointed by God to reinstate others in a life of fellowship with the heavenly Father and of doing good to their needy brethren. Thus would he help them to a true idea of the Messiah.

As a third designation of the Messiah, we find the term, Son of God. That this referred to Jesus primarily as the object of the Father's choice, conscious of a special mission from God to men, is evident from three principal moments of his life : at the temptation ; in Peter's confession at Cæsarea-Philippi ; and at the adjuration of the high priest during the tragic trial. Already, in the Old Dispensation, Israel had been called God's Son, and afterward the same title was bestowed upon the theocratic king — in both instances referring back to a divine appointment. The significance of the temptation for the consciousness of Jesus lay in the principle that as his Sonship consisted in perfect moral sympathy and likeness with reference to the Father, so his mission must be the manifestation of the same character — the pure spirituality of love. In a supreme moment Peter, as his confession shows, beheld, as by a flash of divine revelation, the ethical union and likeness of Jesus with God. And the high priest would only ascertain whether Jesus claimed for himself the special favor of God, such as had been sacredly associated with the kings and people of Israel, and which implied that Jesus and not the Jewish people was the chosen object of God's approval, hence as

Messiah taking precedence of them in the purpose of God. According to all the Gospels, this Messianic function of Jesus as Son of God was exercised by him during his earthly life, while, for Paul, Jesus, although essentially Son of God on earth, yet was first, by means of the resurrection, constituted Son with royal honors. We therefore conclude that the term, Son of God, so far as it has a Messianic reference, points to such a relation of oneness existing between Jesus and the Father, that in virtue of this he is the object of the Father's unique love, possessor of a peculiar spiritual endowment, and intrusted with a work which no other one can fulfill. He is thus that one in whom the glory, that is, the real nature of God is revealed. It is to be observed that in Jesus' own self-designation as Son of God, we do not find any explicit reference to his physical origin, to his eternal preëxistence, or to his metaphysical relation to the Father.

The general attitude of the Apostolic church towards Christ as exalted impresses us by the uniqueness attributed to him, especially by the rank assigned to him with reference to God. These men are monotheists; and they have not, since they became followers of Christ, surrendered aught of their zeal for the one God. But along with this is a relation to Christ which is nothing less than religious. He is the "Lord" to whom they owe allegiance, from whom comes the security of their hope of salvation. From the unseen world he was creating a new order of human society, drawing men away from their sins, inspiring them with a new love for their fellow-men, himself in them a new ideal and power of life. The appellation "Lord," which is so frequent in the Apostolic circle as a designation of

God, is the common term by which they refer to the exalted Christ, — an unmistakable evidence that they saw in him as glorified the authority and kingship which belonged to God. Nowhere is this feeling more clearly shown than in Romans xiv, 1–12, where the application continually shifts from God to Christ, finally settling down upon Christ. His followers call upon him in prayer, and believe that he has power to grant their requests. They live in him and he lives in them, so that between him and them is affirmed the most perfect identity of spirit and aim possible to personal beings. This was indeed a mystical union, but it was no mere poetical feeling; on the contrary, it was the atmosphere of their sober life. To be in this relation was the highest good, by means of it the flesh was conquered, the weakness and evil of this mortal existence became occasion for rich display of divine might, and life after death but entrance upon the sphere where both body and spirit were glorified in the presence and by the power of the Saviour. He was thus the judge before whom they were to appear, — already then the Searcher of hearts, — and was to be the final just rewarder of each man's work. They looked forward with eager hope to his reappearance as the one to whom the Father had intrusted the bringing of human history to an end in the sudden and glorious consummation of the kingdom of God.

There are also certain designations in which the Apostolic feeling was concentrated and made luminous. He is the "Head of the church," that is, the central life in which all the members unite, the source of spiritual energy by which their action is animated. Nor is his power restricted to the inner circle of their moral

existence, — this is indeed a function of the highest character, — but he possesses all power, and in the interests of his followers controls the forces of this world. The ground of this action lies in the principle that through him the world exists; by his directing energy he is bringing it forward to its destined end as subservient to the kingdom of God. He is also the “end of the creation;” as such, two words describe his relation to it: (1) Recapitulation — he is the one in whom all the diverse portions of the world, which apart from him are fragmentary and lacking in coördination, are drawn into an organic unity and find their interpretation (Eph. i, 10). (2) Reconciliation — through him the discords and alienations caused by sin give place to that conscious union of personal lives in which the redemptive purpose of the social body is fulfilled (Col. i, 20–22). He is, moreover, the “image of God.” On earth in human form he was the perfect reflection of the Father’s life and love, and now as exalted in him are concentrated and made available for mortals the grace and glory of God who dwells in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen nor can see. Again, he is the “fullness” of God. Other beings have received the wisdom, goodness, and power of God only in part; in him these exist without limitation. As exalted, he is now above all created forces and intelligences, and the love of God, which is the source of the universe, has in him the unrestricted channel of its expression. Whatever philosophy of the world, and especially of angelic beings, may have furnished occasion for this peculiar form of assertion, if we translate the Apostle’s notion of exaltation into its modern equivalent, we shall find him saying that Christ is

superior to all the forces of the universe and to all known orders of rational being, even the highest, saving only the Father.

These are designations of great significance. They are not, however, isolated statements, but their equivalents are found in all the Apostolic writings, and they fitly represent the universal attitude and feeling of these writers towards Christ. They do not call him God in the absolute sense, nor could they do so consistently with their strict monotheism ; this idea is always set forth by the term God, or Father. In the sphere of their religious life, however, the Son was to them what the Father was in relation to them. How far they had speculated upon this matter we may not be able to decide. They certainly employed terms which had their origin and history in religious philosophy, and thus savored of metaphysical content. In any case, by the use of these terms, they put the exalted Christ into the position of authority and power occupied by beings to whom the philosophy of the time assigned the highest rank under God. Not only so, but they subordinated the super-terrestrial beings to the will of the glorified Christ. They did more than this: they attributed to him functions which can be referred only to a person with divine powers. And still further, his relation to the Father was different from that of all other beings, a relation which could be expressed only by such terms as "first-born," "Son," and similar designations. Whether or not the Apostles unfolded the implications of their religious faith into forms of reflective thought, is of secondary importance. In any event, we cannot without further ado leave this subject where they left it. We are obliged to carry for-

ward the inquiry to the point of ascertaining whether here was only one more instance of apotheosis of a human being, or if not, whether we can state the meaning of this religious attitude in precise theological terms, that is, in language which shall be as available for the faith of the present time as was the Apostolic expression for that time, or whether, finally, we must rest the problem where we find it, mainly in the sphere of religion.

In preparation for the fuller answer to this question, we have to consider the four stages through which the Apostolic consciousness passed in the development of its idea of Christ. The tracing of these steps is of interest, since thus we are pointed the way to that further unfolding of the doctrine of the person of Christ which attained such vigor in the fourth and fifth centuries of our era, and which, after being arrested for a thousand years, entered upon the richer development which owes its impulse to the Reformation.

The four stages referred to are: (1) The influence of Jesus upon the disciples during his earthly intercourse with them. In this they became aware of several very definite impressions. (a) They came into contact with something in him which they had never felt in any other person. They did not stop to describe, nor did they at this time try to analyze or classify it. But he had penetrated to the inmost depths of their being. He had called them and they followed him. Their future was bound up utterly with his. As far as possible they had gone out of their own life to enter into and live his life. (b) They continually experienced swift and momentous alternations of consciousness concerning him. Almost from day to day they were forced

from one extreme to another : now gladdened, now depressed ; attracted one moment, the next repelled ; in Galilee hopeful and enthusiastic, in Judæa anxious and despondent ; here comforted, there staggered ; this instant animated by faith, the next plunged into despair. While Jesus was ever more fully disclosing to them the inner depths of his being, there was quickened within them a spirit of expectancy which anticipated from him the greatest conceivable revelations of personal power. (c) In the full energy of this association and while the swift changes in their consciousness were still under way, suddenly and unprepared for, all was arrested by his violent death. There had been planted within them, however, an inner necessary logic of development which, if it could be checked by the death of Jesus, could not be destroyed. In the deep subconscious region of their being a mighty impulse had been started, which, even if momentarily arrested, still contains the promise of a wholly unlimited evolution.

(2) The second stage through which the Apostolic consciousness passed had to do with the risen Christ. This was also marked by three features. (a) Unheralded and in a moment began their experience concerning him as risen. There was in the case both of the followers of Jesus and of Saul of Tarsus no conscious presentiment, but under different conditions there came in an instant and without warning the revelation of the living Christ — an experience of which no account can be satisfactory which ignores the subjective preparation, albeit unknown to them, in the minds of all of them alike. (b) In the very first moment of Christ's self-revelation, they become aware of him as invested with qualities which, in the same degree at least, they had not

known in him before. He is now living in another world, under different conditions; the earthly lineaments have faded away; he is now the celestial, glorified One; no longer the lowly Son of man, but "constituted the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i, 4). (c) This idea concerning the glorified Lord thus planted and suddenly bursting into bloom, went on from year to year maturing—the creative principle of an enlarging experience wherein the source of it must be interpreted in terms adequate to the felt reality. The earliest self-disclosure of the risen Christ to the first disciples could not remain for them simply an isolated phenomenon, however remarkable, but must impel them to an ever renewed search for the meaning of it, partly in the character of the fact itself, and partly in their deepening consciousness of Christ which owed its initiative to that mysterious event.

(3) This conducts to the third stage of the developing conception of the person of Christ. The light of his celestial glory threw back upon his earthly life a significance which it did not have while he was yet with them. It is indeed noteworthy that the Synoptic presentation is so little colored from this source; only in the later writings of the New Testament does this tendency make itself powerfully felt.

(4) Connected with this was a fourth stage: he to whom, as exalted, they had ascribed divine properties must waken the further question concerning his origin, whether he came into being like other men, or there was in his personality a divine element which did not owe its existence to his human parentage. To this question several answers appear to have been

attempted. One was contained in the birth-stories of Matthew and Luke; a second was embodied in the accounts of the baptism; a third, in the Logos-doctrine of the Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Hebrews; while a fourth is disclosed in the conception of preëxistence as set forth by Paul. Thus the cycle of Christian experience is complete; the logic of this life has worked itself out in the consciousness of his disciples after his death, and we are in possession both of what the men of the first century thought of Christ and of the beginning of the development of the doctrine of his person.

That we do not have here simply an instance of a human being transformed after death by the enthusiasm of his followers into a divine being, that is, of apotheosis, — he who was once a man becoming a god, — is evident from the Apostolic idea of preëxistence. Under whatever conditions of contemporary thought this conviction of the early church was reached, scholars of all shades of opinion are agreed that, as has just been intimated, a doctrine of preëxistence is found in the New Testament.

The church has also from the beginning held to the conviction that a divine preëxistent reality became incarnate in Christ. This has been motivated in part by a doctrine of the Trinity, in part from a conception of redemption as a deliverance from corruption, realized through the taking up of the human into union with the divine nature in Christ, and in part from the relation of the knowledge of God to salvation: he alone can reveal God the principle of whose personality is divine.

The statement of this doctrine finds classic expres-

sion in the creed which has been dominant in the church since the fourth and fifth centuries A. D. According to the creed of Chalcedon, we "confess to one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a rational soul and body;¹ consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like us, without sin; . . . to be acknowledged in two natures, *inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably*, the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into persons, but one and the same Son."

There are, then, two general aspects of this doctrine which in any statement of it cannot be ignored. First, the fundamental assumption that the nature of God is essentially different from the nature of man. Thus the divine unchangeableness guarantees that the divine nature can never have become human, and the characteristic qualities of human nature forbid that it shall ever become divine. If, therefore, the Second Person of the Trinity becomes incarnate, this can take place only by the divine nature assuming or uniting to itself a human nature.

The second essential element is that in the Logos are two centres of consciousness and activity; one as incarnate in connection with the human nature of Jesus — a condition which may be marked by self-limitation

¹ Cf. "Perfect God and perfect man of a rational soul and human flesh subsisting," *The Athanasian Creed*, § 32.

of knowledge or power, but which is purely voluntary and may at any moment be overstepped if he so wills;¹ the other, the unchanged persistence of the pre-incarnate consciousness, having a cosmic character, infinite in power and knowledge, in no way interrupted by the incarnation in relation to the universe.² Thus the two foci of consciousness and activity are connected with two wholly different sets of relations, one individual, the other universal.

An analysis of the positions here maintained reveals two strata with widely divergent interests — the religious and the metaphysical. The religious interest was connected with the person of Christ, the Redeemer and Lord of men; the metaphysical interest revealed itself in the theory of the two natures and their relation to each other and to the person of Christ. On the one hand, the ancient church felt that the entire meaning, the eternal worth of redemption, was bound up with the Godhead of Christ, disclosing itself under human limitations; on the other hand, to the presentation and defense of the metaphysics of the theory, they consecrated a peerless wealth of religious devotion, of speculative inquiry, of relentless logic, and of accurate definition. Its immortal merit is that, for more than fifteen centuries, amidst attacks of the most formidable kind, it has preserved, in terms of reason, a statement of those realities in Christ which have been the very source and principle, not of faith alone, but also of intelligent apprehension of the person of Christ.

We have now to raise a twofold inquiry: whether the metaphysics which underlies this confession is essen-

¹ Augustine, *On the Gospel of John*, Tract. xlix, 18.

² *Ibid.*, To Volusianus, chap. ii, 6.

tial to our modern conception of the person of Christ, and, if this is for us no longer valid, whether we may from the ethical and religious consciousness of Christ find the material for a rational Christian belief concerning him. Before we reply to these questions, however, we must do justice to the spirit and aim of the men who, in the great creeds of the early church, with infinite pains gave expression to their living faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord. Into such words as "essence," "substance," "hypostasis," "nature," and distinction of "nature" and "person," was poured the indestructible conviction that the eternally divine was manifested in Christ. Or again, men confessed that he was God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Eternal Son, the Eternal Man in God, the Eternal Prototype of humanity. Such language is suggestive of a period when the person of Christ absorbed the religious and philosophical interest of men of spiritual genius. It witnesses to the conviction that the meaning of Christ is exhausted by no categories drawn from time and space; and humanity, that is, men as they knew them and as they knew themselves to be, could furnish no final explanation of the transcendent reality of this person. He in whom the being of God is so perfectly revealed must have the basis, and thus the interpretation, of his being in God. And it will be observed that although the primary interest of such terms as have just been cited was religious, yet in the service of this end another aim was scarcely less prominent. These men would take all philosophy captive and lead it in triumph in the honor of their divine Master. Moreover, the interests of faith, which from generation to generation were renewed in an experience of Christ's power,

which was for them far greater than all that was in the world, compelled them to assign him the place in their thought which he held in their life. Thus they pressed into service every form of designation, short of calling him absolute God; yet in this sense even the Father was not for them absolute God. It is further to be noticed that the terms applied to the divine in Christ, by their very number and diversity, reveal that they are not exact and exhaustive descriptions, but words "thrown out" toward the reality, a reality which they could suggest, but could not fully grasp or define.

Taking up now the metaphysical aspect of this creed, it is in general to be said that we have to-day an altered conception of the relation of God to man, with a different notion of the relation of substance to attribute, and with a more adequate idea of personality and the laws of consciousness, due to advances in psychology. There are, however, two specific notions which render it increasingly difficult for us to adopt the explanation there offered concerning the person of Christ. One is, that although perfect manhood, and the bare abstract elements regarded as necessary to constitute that manhood, are affirmed, yet what is affirmed is not adequate to the end proposed. We are told indeed that Christ was "of a rational soul and body, consubstantial with us." But we know and can know nothing of a human rational soul apart from, and previous to, a relatively independent rational consciousness. Soul can be described only in terms of consciousness. When, therefore, it is held that "all that we are required to abstract from our total conception of man, in order to have a just and consistent view of the God-man, is a merely

human personality,"¹ we are at once thrown into the greatest confusion. To abstract "a merely human personality" from "our total conception of man" is to abstract everything and to leave nothing, unless we are content to substitute a notion for a concrete reality. For what intelligible conception of man remains after we have taken away all that man is as we know him? There is no such thing as human nature or man in the abstract, nor is there such reality as man or human nature apart from individual men. Such an existence might be alleged in a realistic philosophy which "mistakes words for things," but experience could never bring one into contact with it.

The other difficulty which is raised by the metaphysics of this creed is that the alleged relation of nature to person is for us unthinkable. If the nature furnishes the material for consciousness, and all that is in the nature rises into consciousness, then Christ had at the same time a two-fold consciousness, and was thus two persons; and, in addition to this, was in the same act conscious of two wholly opposite relations as finite and infinite, as human and divine. It is, however, affirmed that "the profoundest mystery of the incarnation lies in the union of the divine and human natures in the personal oneness of Christ."² It is also declared that "we ought never to make our recognition of the existence of this union of the divine and human in Christ dependent, as to its ultimate authority, upon our insight into the nature and manner thereof."³ But this exhortation, never to allow our recognition of the

¹ H. B. Smith, *Christian Theology*, p. 422.

² Miley, *Systematic Theology*, vol. ii, p. 40.

³ Van Oosterzee, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 526.

union of the divine and human in Christ to depend for its validity upon a rational apprehension of the nature and manner of it, on the ground that it is a mystery into which we have no insight, must be reëxamined. Has not the alleged mystery been created by the supposition of certain facts? And if, as we must allow, there is a mystery in the person of Christ, does it lie here, or elsewhere than as claimed by this theory? If it lies elsewhere, may not the point of difficulty be shifted from the relation of the two natures to the personal oneness of Christ to the relation of the human to the divine aspect of his consciousness?

If, then, we cannot accept the metaphysics which is thus associated with this doctrine, in which there is supposed to be found an adequate explanation of the unique personal consciousness of Christ, do we with the metaphysics also reject the ethical and religious elements of this consciousness which the doctrine embodies? No; but we confess all that the church has ever believed. As compared with the past, the terms may be filled with different significance; to the modern mind, nature and person have a meaning which would have been unintelligible to Greek philosophy. Notwithstanding such a change, however, the essential demands of Christian faith remain the same. (1) There is that which underlies the title which has frequently been attributed to Christ, the God-man; here is God; here, too, is man. On the one hand, the peculiar quality of Deity; on the other hand, the integrity of human nature in its highest manifestation: all the moral properties of the Father, and all the properties which belong to man, "even will." And this dual distinction is forever to be affirmed; the

human does not become the divine; the divine does not become the human. (2) Here is a consciousness which is explained neither by the divine apart from the human, nor by the human apart from the divine. Whatever the metaphysical reality underlying the being of both God and man, this does not account for the kind of consciousness that appears in Jesus Christ. (3) The unity of the personal consciousness of Christ is to be maintained; accordingly it is neither mixed, — partly human, partly divine, — nor is it double, — at one time divine, at another time human. It is one consciousness. (4) The human aspect of the consciousness of Jesus never existed apart from his consciousness of God. No individual consciousness rises solely out of the depths of human nature, as such, without relation to the outside world; much less does it form itself in total isolation from the immanent God. Jesus became conscious of himself, but never once of himself alone in isolation from God; this consciousness was at the same time an awakening to the reality of the world without. But even more than this, the development of Jesus' consciousness was also, and equally, the unfolding in the same personal centre of the consciousness of God. It is thus evident that the creed of Chalcedon holds fast to those essential, ethical, and spiritual realities in the person of Christ which are required by a rational Christian faith.

If, now, from the earthly Jesus we would ascertain whether there was in him an element which could not be referred to his human birth, we have to fasten our regard upon the most characteristic quality of his earthly life. This quality was, as we have seen, love. It was in the degree, that is, the perfection of his love

that he was marked out from all other men as a unique person. In this, therefore, must be sought that eternal element to which the consciousness of Jesus bore witness, which has been enshrined in all the great doctrines concerning his person.

Suppose we now ask concerning the relation which love bears to him as a man. Is love a human quality? To this question only one answer can be given by him who knows the meaning of affection, of home, and the essential bond of society. Shall we claim that perfect love is impossible to man? That in idea, at least, it exists already for every man is an affirmation of our rational being; that it is binding upon us, every one, is the testimony of our moral nature; that we strive after the realization of it is the glory of every unattaining spirit; that it is not, however, simply an impossible dream, but has been actualized by One who lived a human life, is a fact which gives to every fainting heart the courage of infinite endeavor. Is love the highest human quality? Again we must reply that if there is any virtue or grace higher than this, we do not know what it is. If love were perfect, then life were also perfect. Shall we claim that love embraces all other human qualities? It is that principle by which the significance of these for man is measured. Knowledge and power are only in part understood; indeed, each of these, and every human attribute, is truly interpreted only in the light of love. Love is also the principle through which all human qualities attain their consummation. "If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love,

it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii, 2, 3). Again, through love, all the properties of man, perfected each in its own order, become a unity of personal relationships. If, then, we look at man as he actually is, we must admit that he is yet far from being fitly characterized by love. But if we regard him from the ideal point of view, then we must hold that his most distinctive nature is love. Could we find a man with pure and perfect love, we should have to confess that here, for the first time in human history, was realized the idea of man.

Penetrating now to the inner meaning of love in personal life, it is plain that, while it starts from the principle of self-affirmation, its first expression is the going out of itself into the life of another, only to find again its true self in that other's life returning into its own in the perfect mutuality of personal relationships. Such a perfection of love is, however, not found between two human beings, since this would imply the perfect surrender of each to each, and this, owing to the limited nature of each, is impossible. If, on the contrary, this could be, then each individual would have given up to the other a part of the integrity and essential meaning of his own life. And this would be not the perfection, but the mutilation of personality. Accordingly, in the sphere of conscious life it can never be that two individuals are wholly identified, one with the other, in idea and will. That which constitutes for the human personality its distinction will forever prevent such a union of two finite consciousnesses that one shall be completely merged into that of the other. But it belongs to the nature of human love in relation to divine love to realize that which is impossible

within the sphere of purely human love. For in this relation man parts with nothing that is proper to his true self, or essential to his perfection; rather does he here enter that path wherein alone his perfection lies. On the other hand, he who wills to live an individual life, whether by intention or through mistake as to the true meaning of such an aim, is foredoomed to disappointment. Only when he consciously transcends the barriers which would separate him from all others, and most of all from God, does he permit his life to become an expression of the Universal Life. He no longer thinks his own thoughts as narrow, arbitrary, individualistic; for him "no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation." On the contrary, he surrenders himself to the Absolute Reason, to the self-revelation of God. "As I hear, I judge" (Jno. v, 30). In such an attitude is no denial of the human reason, as if this were annulled or silenced in the presence of the mind of God, but in and through the human reason the divine mind declares itself: "As the Father taught me, I speak" (Jno. viii, 28). Nor have we to do with a merely external authority, sounding down from above and without, forever alien to the soul itself; but the voice, even if it is that of God, finds a perfect response in the inmost depths of the being. It may be distinguished, but it cannot be separated, from that being. It is indeed felt to be a truer expression of one's ideal nature than anything else can be.

The same principle applies also to the will. Here the choice, although connected with impulses and appetites which man shares with the animal existences, is no longer restricted to a limited area of aims; it is not fully interpreted by a particular, individualistic circle

of interests ; it rises above all temporary, partial forms of will to unite itself with the Universal Will. The law of self-realization announced by Jesus in his profound sayings concerning the losing and the saving of life, and concerning the seed which yields up its limiting husk in order to set free the inner principle for a larger embodiment, has here its supreme instance. "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father doing: for what things soever he doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner" (Jno. v, 19). "I am come . . . not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me" (Jno. vi, 38 ; cf. iv, 34 ; v, 19, 20, 30). The fact that Jesus can say this concerning himself and the law of his action contains the highest proof that he is the Son of man. This it is to be the Son of man. In such perfect self-surrender of the human to the divine will is the ideal of humanity. He of whom it is true may say: "I live indeed, but my life is not merely my own ; it is the 'life of God.' " This, instead of being the extinction, is rather the perfection of personality. He who realized this was the only one of all who have had existence on the earth who could say, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

This, then, so far as man is concerned, is the nature and meaning of love — the giving up of the individual self as such, in order that through the union of the finite human consciousness with the infinite fullness of God the human life may be God-filled. "It is the very central fact of our Christian faith that once for all it has been realized, and that in the person and life of Christ we can recognize a nature from which every dividing, disturbing element has passed away — a mind that was

the pure medium of Infinite Intelligence, a heart that throbbed in perfect unison with the Infinite Love, a will that never vibrated by one faintest aberration from the Infinite Will, a human consciousness possessed and suffused by the very spirit and life of the Living God ! ” ¹ That a perfect union of this nature has been realized in only one person militates in no degree against the ideal worth of such a life for others. On the contrary, it has established forever, within the heart of humanity, that ethical and spiritual type of person after which we men can never cease to strive.

Consider now in what way the nature of God may be most fitly described. The first question is, whether there is any category under which all the known attributes of the divine nature may be arranged. The answer to this question will run in three lines of inquiry. (1) Within the sphere of the creative process. Here is revealed a vast fullness of divine power. The world itself, in its constitution and laws, expresses certain regular phases of God's activity. Especially if we regard the creation as a process of development, in which the divine ideals are coming to realization, we have no difficulty in deciding between lower and higher, between that which is subordinate and that which is supreme. In its infinite beauty and adjustment of part to part, this world is a revelation of wisdom. Its constancy and ordered harmony, unchanged from age to age, bear witness to God's mighty power. But when we look for the superlative quality of God revealed in the creation, we find it not in wisdom or power or anything else than love. The last fully to emerge in the creative process, which had hitherto been immanent in

¹ Caird, *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, vol. ii, p. 171.

every stage of it — “the last of life, for which the first was made,” is love.

(2) In the process of history, in the movement of human life towards its goal, we have also a revelation of the nature of God. Certain great outstanding features of the divine activity have always impressed thoughtful students of history with an irresistible might. Here again are disclosed the wisdom and power and omniscience of God, his truth and justice, his retributive action and holy ends. These and other divine attributes have taken their place, one after another, in men’s apprehension of God. In the process through which these ideas of God became cleared were defective thoughts of him, as that he was a national deity, or cared only for certain classes of people, or that he determined the destinies of men by an arbitrary exercise of will. Once and again two conceptions of the ways of God with men have struggled for the mastery: “Clouds and darkness are round about him, justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne.” At one time men are tempted to complain that God’s dealings with them are shrouded in an impenetrable mystery; again, with boundless gratitude, they confess that his providence is like the clear shining of the sun after rain. Some principle, however, must be found which shall reconcile this apparent opposition. The whole movement of history emerges in unclouded splendor first in Christian faith. “God is love.” This word not only lifts men to the highest possible knowledge of God, but it throws back a flood of light over all the earlier stages through which man’s apprehension of God in history had to pass on the way to its consummation.

(3) If God becomes an object of rational thought, in

which our human personality has an infinite interest, if, that is to say, we present him to ourselves as pure spirit, with the boundless powers and capacities which belong to perfect being, our first impulse is to classify his attributes in the order of manifest importance, beginning with the so-called natural, as omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, and then adding the moral, as holiness and righteousness and truth. But such a classification would be in the highest degree irrational, if by so doing we intended to divide the being of God into two separate and isolated groups of attributes or actions. On the contrary, we are to conceive of each attribute in the unity of the divine personality. God is one. He has one consciousness, and one principle of action. We have, then, nothing to do with bare omnipotence, or mere omnipresence, or with unrelated holiness and truth. If there is omnipotence, it is the omnipotence of love. Nor can we conceive of the divine omnipresence save as it is the universal immanence of love. And what is omniscience, but the form in which love is aware of its own nature and of its purpose and action in the creation? Likewise, if we speak of truth and holiness and righteousness and glory, we are referring only to the modes in which love endures in its purity and grace and blessedness. To sum it all up in a word, our idea of God is identical with our idea of love. We know no God who is not love; we perfectly know love only in God. This is the eternal distinction of the nature of God, that he is absolute love.

A further question concerning the love of God remains to be considered, namely, its self-revelation in and to man. Not only is God at every moment the

Source and Ground of all that is, so that "all thinking things, all objects of all thought," are immediately dependent upon him for their existence, but he is also disclosing himself in the nature and development of all orders of existence, to each one according to its capacity of expressing such revelation, and most to self-conscious beings who, in the freedom of personal action, long for and welcome the highest spiritual unveiling of the divine life. This self-revelation of God, in which as man becomes self-consciousness he becomes at the same time and in the same degree conscious of God, in which God relates man to himself in the closest possible spiritual unity, in which, too, what is highest in both God and man comes to manifestation, is the meaning of love in God and the way in which love declares itself. Here is no separation of God from man, but a unity in which the action of the two may indeed for purposes of thought be distinguished, but in actual consciousness cannot be discriminated. This fact is witnessed to in several confessions of Paul, notably in the assertion that he no longer determined his life from an individualistic centre; but he had become a personal organ for the living Christ (Gal. ii, 20; cf. Eph. iii, 16-19). The same Apostle makes it clear that in this profound principle is the ideal law of all Christian experience. If one works out his own salvation, it is only because God works in him to will and to work (Phil. ii, 12, 13). In Jesus, however, is the perfect realization of this idea. His varied self-testimony discloses this law as the secret of his own life. "The Father is in me, and I in the Father." "I and the Father are one" (Jno. x, 38, 30). There is only one light in which Jesus will have men regard both his teaching and his

works : these are not his own, but the Father's. "The Father abiding in me doeth his works" (Jno. xiv, 10). For him the unity which is between the Father and himself is the type and ideal of his relation to the disciples, and of each of these to all the others (Jno. xvii, 11, 21-23). Such is the nature of the divine love, that it goes out of itself in order that in responsive hearts it may find itself again, that in human thoughts the divine Reason may give content to the finite consciousness, and in the fragmentary, temporal deeds of men the will of God may have true, even if transient and partial expression, the whole meaning of which, however, is known not in the deeds themselves, but only as interpreted through their relation to the infinite and eternal purpose of God.

If this is true, then there is an element in the ideal human consciousness which cannot be accounted for in human nature as such. But indeed there cannot be in any concrete human life human nature as such, that is, as isolated from the presence and energizing of God. Just as the explanation of the finite world does not lie in itself, so in the highest human experience is a principle which does not originate with man. As we come upon the complete expression of this principle in Christ, we find it characterized by two features. First, it makes itself known to us as an infinite and eternal reality whose home is in God. It is, therefore, divine ; indeed, it is nothing less than "God in Christ." Secondly, it is that quality in God which we call the self-revealing or self-communicating principle of his nature. If there is an internal aspect to the divine nature, which is closed to human observation, where abide "the deep things of God," — a being in and

for himself, open only to his own spirit, — there is an internal aspect also, a self-revealing and self-communicating activity, the very essence of which is love. If this is for us the distinctive thing in God, it is not less the characteristic property of Christ.

What, then, are the positions which we have reached in our inquiry? Summarized as a basis for further discussion, — (1) the principle in which the nature of man is perfected and is completely revealed is love; (2) as Christians, we find the central principle and source of all activity of the divine nature is love; (3) the nature of God as real and the nature of man as ideal are not essentially disparate, but one and the same, that is, love; (4) in the consciousness of Christ the nature of God and the nature of man are essentially present and essentially revealed.

In this discussion we have purposely left at one side all questions which have their sole value in metaphysics, and confined our attention wholly to the contents of the consciousness of Christ. These are the ethical and spiritual realities which alone are of interest to us in our religious experience, and can be verified in our life in relation to him. From no other source can we derive an authoritative conception of his person. As a result of our consideration, we are put in possession of all the essential elements which the great creeds have affirmed. We have found him “perfect in manhood,” “of a rational soul and body,” “consubstantial with us according to the manhood,”¹ his human nature “retains its own essential attributes,”² and is marked by “all the essential properties and

¹ *Creed of Chalcedon.*

² *Formula of Concord, Art. VIII, affirm. ii.*

common infirmities thereof, yet without sin.”¹ But he was also “perfect in Godhead,” “truly God,” and “consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead.”² And if we use the term “nature,” not as referring to the qualities and attributes by which men and God are constituted what they are, regarded as at rest, and irrespective of consciousness, but as describing the essence of ideal personal consciousness and activity, — which is the only meaning in accord with the demands of faith and sanctioned by our modern notion of personality, — then all that was affirmed of “nature” in the great confessions of the church we reaffirm with an even stronger insistence on the reality involved than did they: “One and the same Christ in two natures, without confusion or change, without division or separation; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each being preserved and concurring in one person; . . . not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son.”³ “Two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion.”⁴ Here, then, is one who, “born of the virgin Mary, according to the manhood,” yet was “begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead.”⁵ In the personal consciousness of Jesus Christ, therefore, God and man were met in a perfect and indissoluble union.

That the formulas cited attached somewhat different meanings to particular words from those which are

¹ *Westminster Confession*, chap. viii, § 2.

² *Creed of Chalcedon*.

■ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Westminster Confession*, chap. viii, § 2.

⁵ *Creed of Chalcedon*.

assigned to them here, is due only to the fact that "in the ancient church the notion of personality as conscious 'I' was not fully recognized. . . . From this one sees how unsatisfactorily here as yet the unifying centre, the proper subject of the person is defined."¹

The question now arises, How are we to designate this eternal reality? In the New Testament this has been indicated by a marvelous richness of terms. The word "Son" is never indeed applied to Christ as if he was as such preëxistent. The references to this reality under other designations are, however, numerous and significant, and they set forth the idea in many diverse forms; for example, Logos, Image of the Invisible God, Form of God, Effulgence of God's glory, Very Image of his Substance, the Principle of the creation of God. It is presented also in a more personal form; thus, he was with God in a timeless existence, Mediator of the creation, existent before Abraham, sent by the Father into the world, and through human birth found in the likeness of sinful flesh. There are also self-beggary and self-divesting of what belonged to him as pre-incarnate, and voluntary entrance into the sphere of an earthly human life.

With such a wealth of designations provided by the Scriptures to express what faith grasps as essential to its life, it is not strange that men have spoken of the preëxistent element in Christ as God of God, Light of Light, True God of True God, Eternal Son, Eternal Prototype or Pattern of Humanity, The Eternal Filial in God, or the Eternal Humanity in the life of God. If, at the present time, the term Son is employed more than any other word, this is not with the intention of

¹ Thomasius, *Dogmengeschichte*, Bd. I, S. 374.

discrediting all other forms of past expression; the age would be untrue to its vision if it failed to clothe its apprehension of the divine in Christ in the highest categories known to it. But just as the designation, Father, was the last step in the knowledge of God, reached only after groping through many imperfect stages in the revelation of the Infinite, and once gained is, as an interpretative principle, carried back through the long historical process of the divine self-disclosure into the unbeginning ages of the divine activity, and into the depths of the divine Being itself, so the term Son, the divine "Light, which lighteth every man coming into the world," signifies no other than that which from eternity was "the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father," and "hath declared him." If in God is, therefore, the eternal principle of Fatherhood, there is in him likewise the eternal principle of Sonship. In him is the source and home of all those relationships which appear in the finite forms of the creation from lowest to highest. Fatherhood stands for the principle of Ground and Cause; Sonship, for the principle of derivation; it is the self-revealing principle of the divine nature, in which also is involved its eternal correlative — Fatherhood. It was this principle which constituted the divine element in the personal consciousness of Jesus Christ.

Here we are indeed moving in the region of symbols. Too long has theology aimed at and, one may add, gloried in forms of expression which belong not to life, but to demonstrative science. We are, however, in the sphere not merely of life, but of life in its most mysterious, creative form. If we are to use language at all, we must use it not to define but to suggest.

The fact that the New Testament writers used such a multitude of descriptive words to indicate the divine in Christ shows, on the one hand, their consciousness that they were dealing with the highest reality known to faith, and, on the other hand, their eagerness to set forth, if only by imperfect intimation, this reality in terms which would make it available for kindling further faith. Whenever the development of theology has finally crystallized around any one of these terms to the exclusion of all others, the life itself has been either smothered in its own shell, or else forced to seek a new home where it may unfold in free and vital fashion. It may be difficult either for theology to present in rational form the content of a living faith, or for faith to recognize in the product of theology that reality which is the quickening spirit of its own being. In any case, one must ever be conscious of this double difficulty. A theology which does not answer to the demands of faith has little value in itself, and but a short lease of life. The Christ of the schools may be a marvelous exhibition of speculative analysis or of logical construction, yet of no more worth to religion than is the complicated mechanism of the Strassburg clock—its only function to mark time! The reason why the phraseology of the New Testament and the early church has survived, is that it was born in unconscious obedience to the law which holds good for all our expressions on this subject. It may be lacking in exactness; for the logician, the literalist, and the plodder it may be vague and unsatisfying; but for him who has found in Christ the revelation of God, the Redeemer from sin, the hope of eternal life, it speaks with a language as varied as the many-voiced

sea, and like the sea suggests a depth, a stretch, and a mystery which no cup of human mould can wholly contain. By such terms, faith is not staggered nor reason stultified; what the one feels to be the source of unfathomable experience, the other presents in forms of thought drawn from the noblest relations of living beings. We have, as of old, this treasure in earthen vessels, in order that now, as then, the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves.

This must not be taken as a plea for obscurantism, nor as an apology for a mode of treatment which declines the aid of a purely speculative method, and even consciously avoids the metaphysical exactness and refinements which have too commonly characterized Christology. It were better to err, if err one must, on the side of under rather than of over-statement. Not that one can exaggerate the significance of Christ for faith, — this is indeed impossible, — but one may mistake the function of reason, and logic, and notions drawn from philosophy in dealing with this supreme reality of Christian experience. He who aids in the divorce of theology from faith must not be surprised if at length faith herself turns away with indifference or disgust from a theology which has already cast off its better half.

The question concerning the relation of the divine aspect to the human aspect in Jesus Christ in the act of becoming incarnate as well as during the earthly life, has been regarded as one of the most interesting, as well as one of the most difficult, in the whole circle of problems centring in his person. During the entire history of the church, until the nineteenth century, the

only view which found wide acceptance was that the Logos in the incarnation, so far as his relation to the Father, the world, and history was concerned, retained essentially the "form of God," remained in full possession of the divine attributes, yet in relation to the human nature, in one or more respects, willed not to make use of omniscience and omnipotence, while in the human nature alone was experience of ignorance, temptation, suffering, and death. This is the common view. The meaning of the doctrine is that although previous to the incarnation the Logos had been in full possession and use of the divine attributes, yet on his assuming human nature, he willed to manifest himself in forms agreeable to the nature of man; the divine nature continued unchanged and impassible; only through union with human nature did he become capable of suffering and death. The difficulties of such a position have already been adverted to. The unreality which haunts the doctrine, however it is guarded against, has, since the Reformation, compelled reconsideration and revision of the ancient symbols, which has resulted in a great variety of statements.

During the nineteenth century there began a new search for the key to the solution of the relation of the Logos to the incarnate life of Jesus Christ. This was undoubtedly stimulated by a fresh study of the Gospels from a critical point of view, by a deeper knowledge of man due to an awakened interest in psychology, and, not least of all, by a widespread conviction that a dogmatic Christology could no longer maintain itself on purely traditional lines. We can only refer to three of these attempts, but this will be sufficient to show the nature and difficulty of the problem, as well as the un-

wearied ingenuity of devout scholars in their endeavor to protect the truth of the human nature in the incarnation, to escape an unreal position concerning the manifestation of the Logos, and to bring the doctrine of the person of Christ into harmony with the presentation of Jesus in the Gospels and with our knowledge of human personality.

(1) There is a view grounded on the assumption of two natures in Christ, but replacing the divine nature, which, according to the orthodox doctrine, remains in full possession and use of the divine attributes during the incarnation, by a divine nature which has voluntarily renounced or suspended either the use or the possession and use of such attributes of the Logos as will allow him to be reduced to the proportions of a human soul. He does, however, retain and reveal the essential properties of truth, holiness, and love.¹

(2) A second theory is that of a gradual incarnation, which alleges a progressive self-communication of the Logos to the man Jesus, which at the ascension was perfected, and he then became the God-man.²

(3) According to a third theory, in Christ the eternal humanity in God became incarnate, a doctrine which rests on the following postulates: (a) the essential unity of the divine and the human natures; (b) the eternal humanity of Christ as a personal factor in the being of God; (c) the self-limitation or the self-revelation of this divine humanity in Christ.³

To explain how the eternally divine entered into

¹ Thomasius, *Person Christi*, Bd. II, S. 143; Fairbairn, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, pp. 476, 477.

² Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine*, vol. iii, p. 328.

³ Goodwin, *Christ and Humanity*.

personal union with man, two general theories have been proposed. One of these is drawn from a fact of universal human experience, namely, that a person may be somehow in possession of vast stores of knowledge and yet be wholly unconscious, or intermittently or only in slight degree conscious of these. The other explanation is sought in the relation of the creative process to the divine self-consciousness, wherein appears a self-limitation in respect of power and knowledge. It is, however, more than doubtful whether such attempted explanations reach the heart of the matter. Consciously or not, these all emerge from the background of modes of conceiving of the preëxistent Son which are not tenable. The fundamental criticism here is that the problem which such interpretations propose to solve simply does not exist. It is better, therefore, to seek light from the New Testament.

In the New Testament this subject is presented from two opposing, yet completing points of view. The common postulate of both is that in any manifestation of God only a portion of the divine nature is unveiled. Inevitably and by natural necessity, the infinite fullness of God's power and wisdom and love never comes to exhaustive expression. Every stage of the divine self-revelation may, therefore, be regarded from either one of two points of view — self-limitation or self-manifestation. The first is allied with the doctrine of the transcendence, the second with that of the immanence of God. These points of view are represented by John and Paul respectively. For Paul, the incarnation was a surrender of the infinite glory which belonged to Christ, who was eternally in the form of God, so that during the earthly existence the essential splendor of

his being was exchanged for the lowly form of a servant; only through the resurrection was he reinstated in his original glory. This appears to furnish the key to those much-discussed allusions in the Epistles to the Corinthians and Philippians, and to others yet more obscure in Romans and Galatians (2 Cor. viii, 9; Phil. ii, 6, 7; Rom. viii, 3; Gal. iv, 4). This mode of conceiving of the revelation through the earthly Christ as a sort of holding back or adumbration of the ineffable radiance of the pre-incarnate One had no doubt its origin for Paul in his experience of the glorified Christ on the Damascus road. As compared with the riches of his previous condition, the human life was a self-beggary; in order to enter upon the lowliness of the earthly form, he had laid aside the glory of the heavenly state. For the Apostle, the human life of Jesus was the one supreme instance of self-abnegation, a restraining, not a manifesting, of all that belonged to the essentially divine. On the other hand, for John, the human life of Jesus was itself a revelation of the glory of the eternal Logos, "full of grace and truth." He had penetrated to the inner essential nature of that simple life, and found in it — in its deeds of gracious power, in its words of eternal truth — not an obscuration, but a revelation of God. These two presentations emphasize different yet complementary aspects of the same reality: from one point of view the unspeakable majesty, the infinite fullness of God could not be manifested under the narrow conditions of the human life of Jesus; from another point of view, however, that human life was an unveiling of the divine love. The two conceptions represent a different aspect of the divine reality, and so complete each other; neither one,

therefore, may be claimed as the exclusively Biblical view, nor is either to be adopted as the only explanation of the fact. And yet if we look a little deeper, the apparent differences disappear: in the ethical and spiritual quality of the life of Christ, both Paul and John discern the same unique reality which constitutes Jesus Christ Saviour and Lord.

What, then, is the meaning of the incarnation? This: that in the personal consciousness of Jesus Christ the divine has come into perfect ethical and spiritual manifestation through the human life of Jesus, and that the human has perfectly surrendered itself to the divine. Jesus Christ thus became a perfect organ for the self-revelation of God in and through a human life, and for the self-realization of man in union with God. There is in him "all of the divine nature and spirit that can be manifested in human form."¹

In order to make this position more apprehensible, we offer four considerations. (1) There is in God a self-revealing principle, the evidence of which is found in all the forms of created existences. As this self-revealing principle is an essential property of God, so it is eternally active in the universe, and all that exists has in this principle the explanation of its being. In the constitution of all things, in the processes through which they have come to be what they are, and in the historical order of human life, this "Word of God" is active and revealed. There is thus a divine element in the creation and in history (Jno. i, 1-4; Col. i, 16, 17; ii, 10; Heb. i, 2, 3). So far as the Logos is conceived of as the root of humanity, so that men have in some sense the explanation of their being in him, it

¹ Hyde, *Outlines of Social Theology*, p. 60.

may be said that "the true relation of mankind to the Lord Jesus is not grasped until he is regarded as the Incarnation of the Eternal Humanity in which the race is constituted. . . . There is eternally in the Godhead a rational, creative humanity, and in that divine humanity our race is constituted." ¹

(2) In harmony with the principle of development, that in the nature of God which is revealed in the universe, from the simplest particle to the most complex organism, from the lowest cell to the self-conscious personality of man, comes in the historical Christ into supreme expression. Since God is ever pouring the fullness of his own life into the orderly progression and ever higher forms of the world, there is created the presumption of a consummation, of which all past movements of the world until Christ were prophetic. An original relation of the Logos to every man as the ground of his personality, revealed in its perfection in Jesus Christ, is the law of the incarnation. He in whom all things were created is the same also through whom they attain their ideal end. "Theology . . . finds the revelation of the divine Logos in the totality of human history, in all the expressions and forms of development of the human consciousness of God." ² Schleiermacher represents the same principle when he says that redemption which is mediated through Jesus Christ is that which completes the creative process, a view which is also vigorously advocated by Dorner. Thus redemption is no afterthought. The world culminates in man, and man is crowned in Christ. The natural order is indeed first, but it is incomplete, and

¹ Gordon, *The Christ of To-day*, p. 235.

² Pfleiderer, *Evolution and Theology*, p. 26, Eng. tr.

was never intended to be final; already it contained, even in its most rudimentary forms, the prophecy of its completion in the spiritual order. Man is a recapitulation of the lower orders of existence, yet characterized by the emergence of a higher principle; but Christ is the head of the man (1 Cor. xi, 3; xv, 45-49). Here is no interruption, no totally fresh beginning in the revelation of the divine, but in one human life a completion of the evolutionary idea which is a perfect disclosure of the divine in personal consciousness. Not only the natural process, but especially the redemptive process, finds its rational goal in a single individual, from whom and through whom the supreme expression of the divine is to extend to the race.

(3) There is, moreover, the kinship of man with God. As we have seen, the human is separated from the divine by no such gulf as was assumed in the earlier ages of the church. The distinction between man and God is difference not of kind, but of degree. Notwithstanding his imperfection and his sin, man belongs to the divine type, and may become like God. His highest knowledge of God comes through his consciousness of the divine in the depths of his own personality.

(4) The secret of the incarnation is revealed through love. God is love. If we interpret Christ through God, even more than this we interpret God through Christ. The words of the Apostle, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" and of Jesus, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," are revelations to us of the personality of God. We believe that God is what Christ is, because we can conceive of no quality of being which transcends that

which was perfectly manifested in him, that is, love. And true love gives not something or some one else, but itself. Here was the perfect unveiling of the divine within the sphere of the human in a life of boundless love.

In love is the meaning but also the mystery of the incarnation. In one personal consciousness was united the highest that we know of God and man; and however momentarily agitated and convulsed, yet when the moment had passed, the human thought was once more a perfect reflection of the divine thought, and the human will a perfect organ for the divine will, so that from first to last Jesus could say, "I do always the things that are pleasing to him," "I and the Father are one." This is the immeasurable secret of the person of Christ. To this fact human experience offers no full parallel. Metaphysics cannot provide the key. But the spiritual consciousness of Christ affirms the truth of it, and our religious experience ratifies, even if it cannot repeat it perfectly in our lives. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness." Here is one who passes through all the stages to which human frailty is subject, yet in each stage manifests in ever widening relations his essential nature, with reference to the Father, to the world, to men, and to himself, until finally there remains only one further deed in which love may be declared; nor from this does he withhold himself, but in death pours out the last full measure of devotion. If the life of God were to appear on earth in a human form, we can conceive of no respect in which the self-revelation would be essentially different from that of Jesus Christ. If you would know God's thought of human life, find it here. If you would

understand the nature of divine love, behold here its self-disclosure. If you inquire concerning the ideal of human excellence, whether of character or of action, then in the lines of this beautiful life read your answer. That God is here, we who know truth and love and sins forgiven and comfort in sorrow believe with all our hearts; that man is here also, we who have felt temptation and grief and suffering and the horror of physical death are equally certain. According as we look on one or other aspect of this unexampled life, we discover God or man.

So long as the Deity and humanity of Jesus Christ are roundly affirmed, Christian faith has nothing to fear from any effort on the part of the reason to arrive at some solution in which the claims of both are fairly met. With this confidence, on this deepest of all mysteries, free and reverent speculation must be invited. So far as explanations tend to relieve the strain of rational faith, or to make more real the fact that the "Word became flesh," they are to be encouraged. For those in whose hearts there is secret witness to the mighty power of this person to unite them to God, there need be no apprehension that the requirements of reason will rob humanity of that in Christ which is to faith most dear, namely, that the Son of God "for us men and for our salvation became man."

Summary of positions occupied in this chapter:—

(1) According as we regard Jesus Christ from one or other point of view, he was the Son of God or the Son of man. The distinguishing quality of his personality was that it was that of a life in perfect and unbroken union with God, which revealed itself in its lordship over the world, in its disclosure of gracious

good-will to all men, and in its consciousness of unique relation to the Father, both in the earthly life and in respect to the life after death.

(2) As the living Christ, he is for the religious consciousness what God is: in him is the revelation of God.

(3) Since in his earthly life his union with the Father was perfect, and there was no moment of his consciousness when that union began in distinction from an opposite condition, we affirm that the divine element did not first originate with him as a concrete person, but was an eternal reality in God.

(4) This eternal reality may be designated as the principle of self-revelation in God, or as the divine principle in the creation and thus in humanity, or by other philosophical terms, as Logos, or by religious terms, as Very God of Very God, or by personal terms, as Son, or it may be undesignated by a precise word, on the ground that no exact description of the supreme manifestation of the divine is possible; yet it may remain an object of unbroken religious faith. Such a process may conduct to an immanent Trinity, or to a historical Trinity which presents God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or to a mystery of the inner nature of God which, since it is closed to Christian experience, is insusceptible of thorough scientific exploration and description.

VII

IDENTIFICATION OF CHRIST WITH MEN: II. THE WORK OF CHRIST

THE work of Christ for men is presented in the Scriptures in three aspects: his earthly life; his death, connected with which is the atonement; and his exaltation.

We are not to ignore the earthly life as a factor in Christ's redemptive work. It has indeed never been wholly disregarded in the doctrine of redemption. Even Anselm held that the life of Jesus was of value not only as example, but also as giving efficacy to his death. Yet since the main interest of theology has centred in his death, and the death has been interpreted as a sacrifice or substitution, after the analogy of the Old Testament, the tendency has been to assign to the life of Jesus a secondary place. It is also probable that theology has been profoundly affected by the teaching of the Apostle Paul, in whose writings, since he was unacquainted with Jesus as living, are few references to concrete acts of his earthly life.

At the present time there are signs of a wholesome revival of interest in the life of Jesus. There are in some quarters complaints even that the ethical interest in his life is in danger of excluding a suitable attention to his death. Two facts are, however, of great significance as pointing to the redemptive worth of Jesus' life. One is, the space in the New Testament devoted to a description of this life; the other is, that in such

a person the life must have power in itself to draw men into fellowship with God. It is not an accident that the attention of the whole world is, with an intensity never before equaled, engaged in the contemplation of the historical Christ. The cry, "Back to Christ!" means not merely that men will search anew the sources whence the faith in Christ is created, but that they will seek in the simple facts of Jesus' daily life the revelation of his power, the secret of his ministry, the spell of his influence. Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Lake of Galilee, the Well of Sychar, the streets of Jerusalem and Bethany, no less than the hill of Golgotha, attract the pilgrim's feet as to sacred shrines.

A portion of Jesus' power to deliver men from all the evils of this world, and especially of sin, must be sought precisely where it was manifested while he was on the earth — in himself. His power was centred in four realities : —

(1) His teaching of God as Father, and the realization of all that is meant by this in his filial consciousness, comes not only to transform and perfect all other truths about God, but also to change fear to courage, despair to hope, to awaken within every heart the cry of "Abba, Father," and to bring the child home to the Father's house. The Absolute is no longer the Unknowable because the Unrelated, nor is God's holiness simply the principle of transcendent and unapproachable ethical separation, nor his sovereignty the source of arbitrary and indefensible decrees; but being the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," he is, although the Infinite Life, yet also the Infinite Light and Love.

(2) That the nature of man awaited interpretation

is shown from the whole history of the world before Christ. Nor can one exaggerate the influence of Christ's words and deeds upon those for whom no one had any hope. The parables of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan, Jesus' treatment of publicans and outcasts, and indeed his entire teaching concerning the kingdom of God, have radically changed the conceptions of men concerning human nature and its capacities. Freed from the limitations of all earlier views, and working as a truly creative force, Jesus' teaching sets man in a new light, and readjusts all the relations of man to man.

(3) Since Jesus is himself the life of God among men, he shows both how one is to fulfill the simplest tasks of every day, and how to meet the most serious conditions of mortal existence. The whole gamut of human relationships is here comprehended, — the home-circle, temptation, sorrow, sympathy, service, sacrifice; in the worshiping synagogue, in the crowded city streets, in mountain solitude, in presence of little children, before scoffing Pharisees, by the bed of the sick, in touch with the lowliest and the lowest classes, — all receive light from his gracious bearing.

(4) Finally, there remains his personal identification with men in the closest life-union. To this the first Gospel refers (Matt. viii, 17); also John (i, 14); in like manner Paul (Rom. viii, 3; Phil. ii, 7, 8); and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii, 14, 17, 18; iv, 15). If there is in Jesus the evidence of moral and spiritual transcendence, there is also the manifestation of a sympathy which does not separate but unites him with every needy soul.

Such is the gospel of Jesus' life. This is the glory

of the Word become flesh, "full of grace and truth." If the question, What if Christ had not died? is raised in a purely speculative interest, its consideration is idle. If, on the contrary, its aim is to call attention to the wealth of redemptive revelation contained in his life, its discussion promises rich results. The Socinians have been so far right in their assertion that in this life of Christ is a redeeming power for men. Even Calvin said in reply to the question, How did Christ destroy the enmity between God and us? that he accomplished it by the whole course of his obedience, citing Rom. v, 19; Gal. iv, 4, 5; Matt. iii, 15; Phil. ii, 7, 8; Ps. xl, 7, 8.¹ It is inconceivable that the life of God, disclosing its nature of love in a human life, should be without redemptive power in every form of its expression. Yet the life of Jesus was brought to an end by a violent death.

In considering the death of Christ, we start with the fact: Christ died. The more common way is to begin either from the transcendental side, the divine law, the eternal purpose, the necessity of restoring the injured honor or the disturbed government of God; or from the human side, by showing the obduracy of sin, out of which grows the need of this death. We, however, start with the fact, and seek for its interpretation. And this is the fact, that Jesus died under conditions which have their explanation in history. At a definite time, in a given place, under circumstances which had been ripening for a thousand years, he, the consummate flower of Israel, was crucified. What were those conditions?

The development of Israel, like that of other peoples,

¹ *Institutes*, Book II, chap. xvi, 5.

was due to the action of two distinct tendencies, the sensuous and the spiritual. In the earlier history of this nation, the sharp antithesis of which these principles were capable remained undeveloped. It is, however, a law, that once any principle emerges within the field of consciousness, it tends henceforth to an ever more complete embodiment of itself in personal form. This development proceeds not without resistance, and culminates only through victorious self-assertion against already unfolding antagonistic forces. This is the constant tragedy of history. According to this law, the death of Jesus has its historical explanation. It was an instance, the most remarkable indeed, of that irrepressible conflict between higher and lower forces which has from the first marked human experience, on the outcome of which the character of its progress is determined.

The two tendencies in the life of Israel, appearing in such startling distinctness in the age of the prophets, each struggling for the sole mastery, had in the time of Jesus reached their highest possible development. On one side, the Jewish hierarchical spirit, a legalized notion of God, and a Messiah about to usher in a reign of resplendent earthly glory ; on the other side, a pure prophetic personality of love, a friend even of the unlovely and the outcast, and a Messiah who went about doing good, inspiring the hope of reconciliation with God through forgiveness of sins and a life of love.

These two ideals of Israel's destiny, thus incarnated in the most intense form in different personalities within the same community, could not quietly coexist, each unfolding according to its nature, without contact

with the other. They are not merely antithetic, but antagonistic and mutually exclusive; if one is to be, then the other cannot be. The conflict, so truly pictured in John, must be waged to its tragic end. That the Jews will not abandon their fixed scheme is increasingly evident; that Jesus cannot prove untrue to his calling is unalterably clear. They have civil power and can supplement it by aid of the Roman arms; he will use nothing but the simple weapons of love. Only one outcome is possible — Jesus must be put to death. Given such a person as Jesus with such a vocation and in such circumstances, and a violent death is the only solution.

If the historical explanation of the death of Jesus is thus to be sought in his circumstances, yet the cause of it is not wholly in outward conditions, but in part in fidelity to his vocation: “Thy will be done!”

Through Jesus’ death the prophetic element of the Old Dispensation was perfected and set free from its Judaistic environment, and rendered permanently available as a universal leaven. Between the fourth century B. C. and the death of Jesus, the “night of legalism” had settled down upon the Jewish people; priestly zeal smothered the prophetic spirit, and in the vicissitudes through which the nation passed, great parties arose which cared for religion only so far as it served political supremacy.

Three ways remained in which this prophetic spirit could be revived and propagated. Either the nation must rouse itself to a sense of its danger, be rid of its hierarchy, and become as Moses wished — a nation of prophets; or some man in the spirit and power of Elijah must lead the nation, through repudiation of

these sensuous forms, back to a spiritual religion. But neither a popular uprising, nor leadership within the nation was possible. One final course was open: the principle of life cherished by the prophets and in Jesus arrived at its perfection, but hindered from further development within Judaism, must be propagated outside of the nation's limits.

In the death of Jesus all that the prophets had stood for was concentrated; by means of this, it broke forth in such resistless might that it gave to the living ideal an unsurpassable and deathless power; it burst all the barriers of Jewish restraint; it established itself as the highest reality in religion among men; it compelled propagation as wide as mankind; it revealed an unwasting capacity of self-renewal.

The death of Jesus was at once the death of Judaism, the emancipation of the prophetic spirit, and the fulfillment and new beginning of the highest life of Israel.

In relation to himself, it was through his death that his personal perfection was realized. His life was an offering indeed for others, but it had first of all worth for himself; he is a person and has his own ethical and religious being. His perfection is not absolute but relative, advancing through struggle to its crowning point. Jesus felt that his death had a significance for himself beyond that of his life. His very shrinking from it, his agony in view of it, his tears and bloody sweat, his repeated cry to the Father, his final calm assurance that this cup also was the will of God, all show that it meant for him the carrying forward of his life to the highest degree. Here is the supreme application of that paradoxical principle: "Die to live." Death is

for Jesus means of a larger life. For death may be regarded from two points of view. It is the moment at which is gathered up the utmost that the physical world has to offer for the destruction of the personality ; or else it is the necessary transition to the full realization of personality — in either case inevitable. If death is not the final stroke of nature's resistless might, but the necessary stage to full realization of personality, then instead of destroying, it emancipates the inner life to fullest freedom of the spirit. He who knew no sin, whose love to men showed itself in deeds of mercy, though he shrank with horror from a violent death, yet in spirit overcame it beforehand ; in that deep cry of trust in the Father he conquered both the fear and the power of it.

This aspect of death in relation to Jesus' personal life undoubtedly has not received the attention it deserves. Ritschl, however, laid almost exclusive emphasis upon it. For him, the significance of Christ's death is seen in utmost fidelity to his vocation. In this fidelity, maintained through bitterest hostility of men, and in almost the last moment on the cross tempted to despair, Jesus realizes his perfection and gains the final height for the founding of his community.

The death of Christ, viewed in relation to sin or the atonement, is one of the distinctive notes of the New Testament. Paul's message centres in this : " Christ died for our sins." John writes : " The blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Peter declares that " his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree." The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts into the mouth of Jesus an Old Testament scripture : " Lo ! I am come to do thy will, O God," and adds, " by

which will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all." The words of the Saviour are thus summed up: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." "I lay down my life for the sheep." "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." And speaking of the cup, "This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many."

Our purpose in this discussion is to seek an answer to two questions: (1) What is the nature of that reality which characterized the life and death of Christ? (2) What is the relation of this to the wiping out of sin in man's life, or better, what is its relation to the attainment of man's ideal destiny?

We naturally turn first of all to the New Testament. Here, as from *a priori* considerations we should expect, we discover no theory as to how God makes effective the work, and especially the death, of Christ for reconciling men to himself. If such a theory had been set forth in the New Testament, it seems unaccountable, first, that for more than a thousand years the leaders of the church remained in great part ignorant of it, and secondly, that theories, when they were broached, were so radically different from one another in principle. If, however, we regard the nature and scope of the Scriptures, it does not appear strange that no theory concerning the death of Christ, and particularly concerning the atonement, is worked out by the writers of the New Testament. They present only the great living reality of Christ in relation to men, or fragmentary aspects of that reality, in order to meet

certain exigencies of argument or appeal, in a word, of experience. Jesus, for instance, made no statement of the way in which his death was to effect the forgiveness of sins, or if he made it, no report of such a word has reached us in the Gospels. The letters of Paul offer abundant material for a theory of the atonement; but he did not himself elaborate a doctrine on this subject. The Epistle to the Hebrews, although it teaches that Christ has superseded every other means of access to God, unfolds no connected scheme by which God's relation to man, or man's relation to God, is changed by the death of Christ. This is not to be understood as if the writers of the New Testament, and even Jesus himself, had no conception of the relation of the mission of Christ to men. It would be far truer to affirm that the only relation of Christ to men, which concerned them, was that of Saviour; and every one of them had a perfectly definite experimental belief that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

The idea underlying this belief of the Apostles is not, however, to be discovered by singling out any one of the many striking terms and phrases which refer to this subject, and employing it as the sole key for the understanding of the work of Christ. To take one of these forms for exclusive reference, thus disregarding others equally symbolic and suggestive, would do violence to the entire circle of thought of which the one under consideration is but a segment. Nor may we hope to construct a doctrine of the atonement by attaching a significance to particular words which is justified neither by history, nor by exegesis, nor by the family of beliefs in which the words in question are

found. Yet both of these erroneous methods have not infrequently characterized attempts to frame a theory of the atonement. With reference to the first error, doctrines have been constructed around single words, on the ground that these contained a formative principle; and other representations of the Scriptures have been forced into harmony with the one symbol selected. Words which have lent themselves to this use are "ransom," "bearing sins," "sacrifice," "propitiation;" or if we go outside of Scriptural terms, "expiation," "satisfaction," "general and distributive justice." Such a procedure, however, ignores the law of symbolism, according to which all creative thought tends to clothe itself in picturesque forms which suggest and partly describe, but do not define. The other error is met with in those constructions of the doctrine wherein a meaning is given to the terms selected which has no sufficient warrant. It suffices at this point to refer to that view of sacrifice which conceives of it as simply expiatory, and not, as the science of religion would lead us to infer was its original idea, as a means of closer union with the supernatural powers of God; or the term "propitiation" is used in a sense which neither exegesis nor ethics permits; or "satisfaction" is made a fundamental principle, but the particular notion of satisfaction adopted, although elaborated with perfect logical precision, is reconcilable with the ethical nature neither of God, nor of law, nor of government, nor of punishment and penalty.

We have now to inquire, What is the relation of the life and death of Christ to the redemption of man? If we here confine our attention mainly to the death of Christ, this is because in that event was gathered up

the spirit and principle of his entire life. The work of Christ in reconciling men to God must be considered, therefore, from two points of view: (1) As a revelation of God's gracious will to restore sinners to ethical and spiritual union with himself. (2) As such an identification of God in Christ with the evil conditions caused by sin that, in enduring these, God enters perfectly into the life of sinful man, that he may thus draw man into fellowship with himself.

I. We consider the work of Christ as revelation.

The progressive thought of God in the Old Dispensation, which culminated in Christ, was a development determined by an ever deeper disclosure of the nature of God and his purpose of grace. This development registered its progress in the ideas, institutions, and customs of the people of Israel. At length, during the Exile, when the earlier forms of national and religious life were no longer possible, when, too, the elaborate and splendid ritual of a later period was as yet undeveloped, the prophetic consciousness, in which bloomed all that was divine in the life of Israel, attained its supreme development. In the prophets of this time — from six to four hundred years B. C. — Israel became in part aware of her destiny: not national supremacy through conquest of arms, according to the views of earlier kings, nor, as was afterward believed by the priesthood, a sacrificial system in which all approach to God was hedged in by the most minute prescriptions, but called of God and endowed with divine wisdom, she was as ideal servant of Jehovah to fulfill her mission, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and become a "light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and

them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Is. xlii, 7). Thus an integral part of the ministry of Israel was the mediation of revelation.

Christ also recognized revelation as a constituent element in his redemptive activity. This is evident in the words with which he opens his ministry in Nazareth: "The Spirit of the Lord anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor." His self-witness indicates the same truth: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father, and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him." He affirmed that those who followed him should know the truth, and that the truth should make them free. One has only to glance at the story of Jesus' ministry to become aware of the large place occupied in it by his teaching. He taught in the synagogues, by the sea-side, in the villages, on the mountains, in the temple, by Jacob's well, on the highways, in homes, in the upper chamber. He taught not alone by plain words, but by matchless parables and by acts which were of parabolic significance, and most of all by his death, to which he attached a meaning of the farthest reaching and most profound character, when he connected it with the forgiveness of sins (Mark xiv, 24), and saw in it an instance of a universal law of the moral order (Jno. xii, 24, 25). In addition to his own teaching, he selected a little group of men, that they might be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach. Thus Jesus definitely associated his ministry with that of the prophets. He felt that in himself the redemptive revelation reached its highest point. He did not, however, believe that no further

revelation was to follow ; on the contrary, he declared explicitly at the last that although he must leave many things unspoken, yet the Spirit of truth, which he would set free by his death, should carry forward, in the widening experience of his followers, the truth which he himself had proclaimed.

This view of the redemptive action, as consisting in part of revelation, has from the first been cherished by the church, although its precise nature has frequently been obscured. But under whatever form the belief has appeared, it has been the inexpugnable conviction that in Jesus Christ is an adequate revelation of all that constitutes salvation for men. In the human race, at the close of a long line of interpreters of God, bringing him ever nearer to men, appeared this supreme personality, in whom was manifest the eternal purpose of grace. The church holds that in Jesus Christ the highest good for the human soul has been made real and available for all. It believes, moreover, that in the presentation of Christ, that is, in all the facts of his life and death and especially of his inner spirit, is God's strongest appeal to men, the most effective deterrent from sin, and the most nearly irresistible incentive to virtue. Here, in the whole manifestation of his personality, — not in certain formulas of doctrine, nor simply in miraculous deeds, but in Jesus himself, — is beheld the love of the Father realizing the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. We only ask men to stop and gaze upon this living reality, in order that its grace and truth may make the impression on them which these are fitted to produce ; and we do not doubt that in such moments of contemplation God will himself speak to the heart as Saviour

from sin, as Lord of the conscience, and as Hope for the blessed life. This is the meaning of "preaching Christ," as well as the justification of such preaching. Because we believe that in Christ we have an unveiling of God's relation to men which transcends all that is found elsewhere and constitutes the motive for Christian missions, therefore we are constrained to share it with all the world (2 Cor. v, 14).

Although the church has found this revelation set forth most impressively in the death of Christ, yet in his life is also a manifestation which brings men into union with God. The significance of this will appear from the fundamental consideration that the purpose of Christ's life was to reproduce in men his own consciousness of God. Here we have the most general and, at the same time, the most accurate description of the aim of Jesus' ministry. We have already seen the nature of this consciousness, — perfect ethical and spiritual union with the Father, and an exhaustless love in which he identifies himself with the lot of men. We can conceive of no aim which shall transcend this. He in whose earthly life was mirrored the uninterrupted reflection of the Father's will would bring all others into a like relation with the Father. He was the well-beloved Son, not that he might forever be God's only Son, but that he might lead all others to a like consciousness with him of the universal pater-nity of God and realization of ideal sonship. If one would convince himself that this is the purpose of the manifestation of Jesus Christ, he has only to read again the story of Jesus' life, — his preaching of the gospel, his intercourse with the disciples and his instructions to them, his treatment of all classes of

people, the Sermon on the Mount, the parables, as that of the Good Samaritan, and his last words in the upper chamber. Thus it was the aim of his life to draw men into such fellowship with himself that they would, by partaking of his spirit, enter into a new relation with God.

The Apostle Paul has undoubtedly laid almost exclusive stress on the death of Christ as the means of our reconciliation with God. Even granting this to be the case, we are not in a slavish manner to follow his mode of presentation, as if this were the only way of stating the truth, or as if his statement contained all the elements for a final solution ; although as a matter of fact, the latter assumption is justified. It is to be observed (1) that Paul, trained in the school of the rabbis, brought over into his new life certain of their peculiar notions, such as that of forensic justification. (2) In writing to the Romans, he naturally adapted the form of his thought to the well-known juridical aspects of the Roman consciousness, not indeed without mixture of Jewish religious elements. (3) Yet he did not separate the death of Christ from the exalted life of the Saviour as the present Mediator of our redemption. (4) His treatment of the whole subject is a transcription of his own individual experience of the grace of God in Christ ; it is this which gives to his statement its vividness and energy of impression. But as the experience was individual, so the presentation shares the same limitation. For him the death and especially the exaltation of Christ were realities of the greatest possible significance, while the teachings and earthly life of Jesus seem to have made a relatively slight impression upon him. (5) If, moreover, one

follows Paul, it must be with the proviso of being allowed to supplement one portion of his teaching with the remainder of it, and the whole of his teaching with that of the Gospels. No moment of the revelation of God in Christ is unessential or to be ignored. Even if the church were robbed of the letters of Paul, and had only the Synoptic accounts of the life and death of Jesus, it would still have a complete gospel of forgiveness and reconciliation with God. Finally, (6) it is susceptible of proof that vast numbers of men have actually been arrested in a career of sin and brought into the most intimate life-union with God, not so much through the death as through some manifestation of divine love which appears in the life of Jesus. Such disclosures of grace as are found in Jesus' treatment of Zacchæus, of the paralytic, of the impotent man, of the woman who was a sinner, and such descriptions of love as appear in the parables, as of the Marriage Feast and the Prodigal Son, must form a constituent part of any doctrine of the work of Christ for man's redemption.

That the work of Christ must be regarded from the point of view of revelation is further evident from two considerations : the need of man, and the nature of the Redeemer. Man's need is that of knowledge. This is not tantamount to the Socratic affirmation of the identity of knowledge and virtue. But as there is no sin apart from ignorance, so there is no goodness without knowledge. Sin and ignorance have indeed been associated — in no accidental way — in the human religious consciousness. In the profound story of Genesis, describing the beginnings of sin in our world, the promise of the tempter was wisdom, but the appeal was

in part to ignorance. Words descriptive of conscious results of sin, such as "to err," "to go astray," "to miss the mark," bring down to us the sad disappointment forced upon early evil-doers by the inevitable but unexpected miscarriage of their plans. Wisdom and sin are opposite poles of human character. Not cause but certainly occasion of sin lies in lack of knowledge. Omniscience and sin are impossible conditions of the same personality. Jesus goes so far as to say that eternal life is the striving after a knowledge of the true God and the Son whom God sent (Jno. xvii, 3). And both Jesus and Paul declare that if the Jews had known the conditions on which their national safety depended, and the nature of the person whom they crucified, they would not have put the Lord of glory to death. Only too often is it the cry of the awakened sinner: "Oh, if I had known this before! Why did not some one tell me?" Among the means used for the regeneration of the more depraved portions of society, one of the most promising is that of education — light in which may be manifest, along with the truth of the gospel, the squalor and wretchedness, the mistaken ideals, which are the source of much of their misery. That a better life is possible, and that means of reaching it are available, this relieves them from the incubus of despair. The redemption of society from its age-long degradation, and indeed from any condition lower than the highest, is brought about by the introduction of a better ideal of individual attainment and of social order. The work of Christ also falls within this circle of relations. The Pharisee and the Publican, sinners of all classes, if they are to be rescued from their evil lives, must come into pos-

session of a new idea of God, a new idea of man, and a new idea of the meaning of their own being. It must be made clear to them that there is another principle than that on which their present action is based, by which alone they can realize the true aim of human life. Because his life ran counter to their traditional conceptions of the Messiah, Jesus Christ was to the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness; but notwithstanding this, he was the wisdom of God and the power of God, and he is destined to supplant, or rather not to destroy but to fulfill, the aspirations which slumbered in the imperfect ideals of both Greeks and Jews, and indeed in all the ideals of life with which the divine ideal is brought into contact. So far, then, as the aim of humanity is reached only in union with God through love, this is due in part to the revelation of the life of love in Jesus Christ. And this is an essential element of his work for man.

The other ground on which it is affirmed that the work of Christ is a revelation is seen in the nature of Christ. This principle is made use of by all the great reflective writers of the New Testament. By one, he is called the Logos, and also the Light; by another, Image of the invisible God; by a third, the Effulgence of the glory of God. These designations are not limited to any one aspect of Jesus' earthly life; if it is true for one phase, it is equally true for all phases of that life. No one doubts that it is valid for his teaching. The Gospel of John treats his miracles as a manifestation of the divine glory (Jno. ii, 11). His sufferings and death, and indeed all his relations to men as sinners, are no exception to this law of revelation. Especially is this the case if the very nature of Jesus'

personality can be understood only from this point of view. If he is the self-revelation of God, then his whole life must partake of the same character and be judged by the same standard. Nor can we conceive of such a person living and at last dying among men without his life and death making on them a unique and powerful impression. This does not lie in the fact that his life was different from that of all others, but in the nature of the difference by which he was distinguished from all men. No one else had ever spoken of God as he spoke of his Father, or shown a like consciousness of perfect intimacy with him. No other man had ever treated the despised of his people — the ignorant, the depraved, the outcast — as he treated them. No one before him had ever answered questions concerning life and death, concerning the visible and the invisible world, concerning temptation, sorrow, doubt, perfection, as he answered them, nor had any one ever appeared in whom word and deed and inner life were in such absolute accord. Nor had any one ever borne himself in such a manner toward sinners : on the one hand, so open-hearted toward all who did not shut themselves away from him that he drew them to himself with a strange fascination ; on the other hand, of such rare and unearthly beauty and purity of spirit that he disclosed to them the truth and glory of another world. Persecuted, instead of seeking safety in flight, he endured the utmost violence of wicked enemies, and in fidelity to the Father's will and in love for men gave up his life in the most cruel death. It is not strange that this life, so unique, so human, breathing the spirit of divine love, has acted on all classes of men with the power of a mighty spell, emancipating

them from the thralldom of sin, introducing them into a new order of thinking and living, and inspiring in them an enthusiasm for humanity to be satisfied only with the reconciliation of all men to God. What Jesus foresaw had already begun to come to pass at the time of his death. According to the Gospels, even within the circle of the twenty-four hours in which he was crucified, the power of his life was manifest: upon the disciples nearest him in Gethsemane, upon Peter in the judgment hall, upon Judas, upon Pilate and upon Pilate's wife, upon the thief on the cross by his side, upon the centurion at his feet, upon a multitude of those who stood near the cross, upon Joseph of Arimathæa, upon Nicodemus — fit beginning all of the fulfillment of the word, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." In this life and death — a death which, instead of ending his life, was the golden door through which he entered into a yet more glorious activity in behalf of men — was revealed a spirit destined to transform the world. The change wrought in the heart of Simon and of John, the publican and the outcast, as well as the faithful in Israel, was but promise of that revolution of moral and spiritual life which is to be as wide as human society. Therefore, Paul was uttering no merely striking metaphor, but the simple truth, when he called Christ the "wisdom of God." John's designation of Christ as the "Logos," "the Word," the revealing principle of God, is no purely abstract formula of Greek philosophy, but a description of the deepest essence of him in whom was unveiled the heart of God.

The chief reality disclosed in the revelation through Christ is the way in which God will treat sinful men. If

he will not deal with sin as if it were not sin, or with the sinner as if he were a saint, yet we must look to Jesus' bearing toward sin and sinners in order to interpret God to us. Four possibilities opened before him: (1) To attack sin with its own weapons; (2) to isolate himself from its contaminating touch; (3) to abandon himself to apathetic non-resistance; he would, however, have neither resentment, nor stoicism, nor quietism. There remained at last (4) only death on behalf of sinners. And this death — symbol of the most intense bodily and spiritual suffering, instead of confession of impotence — was the energy and triumph of love. "Where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly." Jesus overcame the "utmost expression of hate," enduring its mightiest stroke, but at the same time that he poured out his life he revealed an infinite love in which lies the ethical conquest of sin.

While from one point of view the death of Christ was an act of the deepest self-humiliation (Phil. ii, 7), yet from another it was an act of glorious and incomparable self-revelation (Jno. xii, 23-28). The same difference of presentation appears here that we saw in the different views of the person of Christ, in Paul and John respectively (p. 166). We have to consider Jesus, not in the temple as a child, nor in the temptation, nor on the mount of Beatitudes, nor by the bedside of the sick, nor as he comforts mourners, nor even in the upper chamber, but on the cross, if we would behold the depths to which love can stoop in order to reveal its glory in lifting up the fallen and recalling wanderers to the "Shepherd and Bishop of their souls."

II. The self-identification of Jesus with men is the second element of his work through which he reconciles

them to God. This fact is the constant teaching of the Gospels. His refusal in the temptation to satisfy hunger, to win homage, or to fulfill his mission by other means than those common to man, his thirst and weariness, his tears for human suffering and longing for human sympathy, at every step his choice of those conditions in which man's frail and sinful life is passed, his agony and shrinking from death, all reveal how perfectly he entered into, and thus made his own, the earthly lot of those whom he would reconcile to the Father.

The Apostle Paul, whatever view we may attribute to him concerning the preëxistent reality of this person, and however sublime may have been his conception of the earthly life of Jesus, yet instead of regarding him as in any sense exempt from the essential conditions of human experience, makes it plain that for him here was the most perfect possible expression of what a human life must be. Passages in his writings, for example, Phil. ii, 5, 6; 2 Cor. v, 21; Gal. iii, 13, to which indeed other meanings have been assigned, will bear only the interpretation that he who became the Saviour gained this distinction through a perfect oneness with men. His form and inner spirit, his activity and suffering, were the perfect expression of a human life uniting itself in the most thorough manner with the want and woe, the sin and evil, of men. So complete was this identification that the Apostle is conscious of no exaggeration when he says that Christ, although he knew no sin, was made sin on our behalf. The Epistle to the Hebrews and the Gospel of John are if possible still more explicit. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews takes especial pains to lay the life of Jesus over against the entire sad reality of our

human lot under the law of sin, suffering, and death, and to show that at every point "he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one." There is thus not one discipline for Jesus and a different one for his brethren, but he and they partake of the same necessity of human experience, even unto a bloody death, for them indeed ideal, but for him actual (Heb. xii, 2, 4). According to the Gospel of John, "the Word became flesh" — a statement of the most perfect identification of the divine principle in Jesus with humanity. Step by step, in all the stages of his public ministry, he claims for himself no exemption from the relations which belong to the perfect man in a world of evil and sin, but at every point he meets the conditions which a good man could not avoid, receives into his own being the pain and sorrow which goodness must suffer in its contact with wickedness and depravity, and at last obeys the law of a violent death which the principle of self-sacrifice enjoins on those who will witness to the truth in a life of perfect love. It is a peculiarity of the Gospel of John to conceive the experiences of Jesus, even the most painful of them, and the final giving up of his bodily life, not as something which separated him from all other men, unique, extra-human, the principle of which was without parallel or existence in any other person, but as the supreme instance of a law as wide as moral experience. Not for Jesus only, but for all men, "except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." What, therefore, belonged to the nature of man to be and to do, that he will do and become.

Thus we see that, according to the New Testament,

there is no more fundamental teaching concerning Jesus Christ than that of his identification with men in their behalf.

The law of this identification becomes clear when we consider that it followed from his very nature. He who is man will choose for himself no other theatre for his service than that offered to him in a human life; he will make use of no powers save those which belong to a God-filled humanity. To one who takes the fact of the incarnation seriously, there can be no limitation of the mission of Jesus to his death, nor can his death be regarded as having only an official relation to God and men, but his entire life has redeeming worth. His nature — the Word become flesh, “who though he was rich yet for our sakes he became poor,” “made in all things like unto his brethren” — pledged that he must act not indeed like the empirical man, but as man who fulfilled the law of his being. He will thus withdraw himself from no task which the divine will requires, or of which the nature of man is capable.

Jesus' identification of himself with men is in accord with the experience of all his followers in their work of reconciling men to God. These men have been marked by two qualities: first, in them God was felt to be present as gracious and forgiving. Incarnating the divine in their own persons, they have brought God near to men as their merciful Redeemer. Secondly, thus mediating the goodness of God, they have identified themselves with the miserable conditions of those whom they sought to uplift. The history of this fact would likewise be the history of every successful missionary. It is equally true of every social-settle-

ment worker, and of the great rescue-missions. Not from a distance, nor at arm's length, but in the closest possible contact, by sharing the lot and experiencing the privations and so far as need be the misunderstanding and contumely which are endured by those whom they would help, do men lift others out of the degradation to which they have fallen, into a pure, unselfish life. In no other way has the gospel ever been made effective. This alone is the gospel. We have here the operation of no strange law, but the simplest and most fundamental principle of human relationships. It is that of a shepherd and the imperiled sheep, the physician and the plague-stricken patient, the patriot and his endangered country, the mother and her helpless child. It is the highest expression of that law of human helpfulness, "Put yourself in his place."

Thus Jesus enters the ranks of all those who seek to emancipate their fellow-men from the evils of this life. From the beginning there has been no other way of raising men out of a condition of privation and distress. For Moses, the founder of the Hebrew commonwealth, for David, the warrior-king, for the prophet who drew the picture of Israel as the ideal servant of the covenant God, only one course was open, if the people were to be delivered from the bondage, whether political or moral, in which they were enthralled, and that was by these men themselves penetrating to the inmost core of sorrow and need from which their people suffered, and by such thorough oneness with the hardship and woe of their people that, on the one hand, they became the greatest sufferers of the people, and, on the other hand, by endurance of such

conditions they made their fellow-men sharers in the deliverance which they themselves experienced in their own persons. The law of the Greek hero is one and the same. With no prerogatives, save those which belong to humanity as such, Hercules and Alexander obeyed the double law on which alone all distinguished service is rendered. For the world-heroes no other path was open. They withdrew themselves in no respect from the circumstances which entailed misery upon their fellow-men, and although they drank to the dregs the cup of suffering, yet their unconquerable spirits, instead of yielding to the wretchedness of which others were victims, came forth more than conquerors, the splendor of their victory heightened by the solitariness of their achievement. And it was not for themselves alone. According to the principle of human solidarity, it was not possible for them alone to reap the good they sowed. Some of them perished before their work seemed to have been accomplished; but each of them involved the world in his victory, and humanity rose to a higher level, from which it has never wholly receded. Thus the law of signal human service is plain: he who most perfectly identifies himself with the conditions of his fellows, yet who finds in the most desperate condition an opportunity for the fulfillment of his vocation, who transforms every obstacle into the stepping-stone of higher achievement, and who uses even the hatred and violence of men as means of a firmer and more perfect expression of love and service, is man's greatest benefactor.

In this perfect self-identification of Jesus with men we come upon a principle which has from the first compelled the deepest thought of the church, namely,

the necessity of Christ's suffering. Centuries before he came, the question, What is the relation of suffering to the ideal human life? had haunted and baffled the great seekers after truth. To trace the development of the ethical idea of suffering would be to write the history of the unfolding of redemption in the consciousness of man. In Job, the suffering of a good man is referred to the ultimate mystery of the divine providence. In Isaiah, it is still assigned to God, but its ethical character, the vicarious nature of it, is now definitely conceived — an advance of the greatest significance for the higher consciousness of man. In the Apostolic church, the necessity of suffering is accepted as a part of the will of God, and, therefore, as a part of the Christian vocation in behalf of others; to these men not suffering, but the absence of it, would have caused inexplicable surprise.

In the identification of Jesus with men, some kinds of suffering, which in the case of men are freighted with the sharpest agony, were impossible to him. Jesus could not feel the burden of guilt, nor be conscious of the displeasure of God. In him was no self-disgust, no remorse of conscience, no fear of punishment, no bondage to an evil disposition, no dulling of moral sensibility. Nor does the New Testament know of any "wrath of God" towards him, but only that in him the Father was well pleased. Those who, as Calvin and Edwards, have held that God caused him to suffer the penal consequences of sin, that is, such evils as God had denounced against sin, do not, however, admit that "God was ever hostile to him or angry with him," but only that our sins and our guilt, which made us obnoxious to punishment, were in such a sense transferred by

imputation to him that he was punished for them.¹ But Jesus suffered neither the actual nor the penal consequences of sin, nor the equivalent of those evils, as a means of expiating our sins. No rational meaning can be assigned to the word "guilt," other than that of personal guilt; no guilt could, therefore, be carried over to Christ by imputation or by any other process. And the divine displeasure, which is the reaction of the nature of God against sin, could by no ethical law known to us be directed against him. Even if this were possible, and Jesus were to suffer punishment for our sins, it would be the gravest injustice to visit further punishment on sinners. On such a ground, either sinners are no longer guilty, or, if guilty, pardon is an act not of love but of justice, by which the very notion of pardon is overthrown.

If we turn our attention to the nature of God, we discover no reason for declaring that the sufferings of Christ were necessary in order to satisfy his righteousness as opposed to his love. We cannot say that while God, from the side of mercy, was propitious to sinners, yet, on account of his righteousness, he was in some measure incensed against them, and accordingly demanded an expiation, on account of which, his righteousness satisfied, his paternal love could have its way. Such a view labors under several defects: (1) It introduces a tension into the divine nature; (2) it sets forth God as requiring to be reconciled to sinners, whereas it is not God but sinners who need to be reconciled; (3) the unreality of this conception of righteousness is revealed by this, that righteousness

¹ Calvin, *Institutes*, Book II, chap. xvi, 11, 6. Cf. Edwards, *Works*, vol. vii, p. 527, "Satisfaction for Sin."

is represented as satisfied by the wiping out not of actual, but only of fictitious guilt. (4) Its great and fundamental defect, however, is its misconception of love. Love in God is not a relative but an absolute quality. Within the divine nature it knows no obstacle to its eternal self-expression. If in any personality love, before it can go forth, has to meet and master a hesitant or opposing spirit in its own nature, then in so far it is itself imperfect. God has not first to allay his moral resentment against sin, making "cost in the endeavor, such cost as new-temper and liquefies the reluctant nature," as is claimed by Bushnell.¹ Love in God is a pure activity, self-moved and self-sufficient, recognizing no other motive, condition, or law but its own principle alone. Paternal love discovers only one obstacle to its perfect self-manifestation. This is found in no tension between it and any other attribute in the father; the obstacle lies solely in the character of the refusing son, in the measure to which his heart is closed against the father's love. The satisfaction of the ethical demands of the divine nature can take place in only two ways, which are not different in the sense of alternative, but parts or stages of the same process: (1) self-expression in the disclosures of grace in Christ, and (2) self-communication conditioned on the willing and complete response of the penitent and obedient spirit of the son.

There are, however, some principles in accordance with which Jesus must suffer. First of all, he became *par excellence* the victim of sin. We have already seen the working of this law. Because he is "according to the flesh" a sinless member of a sinful race, and

¹ *Vicarious Sacrifice*, vol. ii, p. 12.

his love rouses to sharpest opposition the evil which rules in that race, he must receive in himself the utmost pain which can be caused by misunderstanding, disappointed ambition, ingratitude, unmasked hypocrisy, treachery, revenge, and cruelty of men. Such suffering is in part physical indeed, but mostly spiritual — the suffering of rejected love. And it was inevitable.

A second ground for the necessity of Jesus' suffering lay in the will of God. In the prophecy of the great Unknown, although the suffering of the servant of Jehovah was shrouded in mystery, yet its secret was hidden in the purpose of Jehovah (Is. liii, 10). Peter in his sermon at Pentecost (Acts ii, 23), Paul in his epistles (Rom. iii, 25 ; Eph. i, 5, 9-11), the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (x, 9, 10), and John (iv, 34 ; vi, 38 ; xii, 27 ; xvii, 4), trace these sufferings to the will of God. As in all the great moments of his life, Jesus here rests back on his consciousness of his Father's will. When the black shadow of the betrayal and crucifixion appalled and overwhelmed him, and he already divined the suffering which was to break his heart, there was first wrung from him the cry of agonized shrinking from the awful cup, and then was heard the deeper note of triumphant assurance that his Father will have him drink it. All theories of the atonement agree in the assertion of this truth. Even if the nature of the necessity has been variously conceived, just as it was by the Biblical writers, yet that its ultimate ground lay in the will of God has never been denied by any one.

This principle is of the utmost significance, since it throws light on the nature of God. If the suffering of

Jesus was willed by God, then suffering is a reality not simply originating by divine appointment, experienced in some one other than God, but true of God himself. A doctrine of the divine impassibility may be congenial to Neo-Platonic or modern deistic speculation, but it is foreign to Christian thought. Thus it cannot be maintained that "Christ did not suffer in the least in his divine nature, but altogether in his human nature," even though it be asserted that this human nature was in virtue of its superior greatness and its perfect union with the divine nature unspeakably more susceptible to pain than any mere creature.¹

In opposition to such a misconception, we must behold in the suffering of Christ the suffering of God. Otherwise God remains unknown to us. We must not be deterred from this position by fear either of anthropomorphism, or of endangering the transcendence of God. Suffering is the symbol by which is measured the identification of Christ with sinners; and if "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," then the suffering of Christ was also God's suffering — the revelation of Fatherhood. The cross was indeed for a few hours lifted on Calvary, but it is an eternal reality in the consciousness of God.

A third ground for the necessity of Jesus' suffering for sinners is seen in the nature of love itself. This does not mean that in an ideal world love could not be conceived of apart from suffering, but rather that in such a world as ours suffering will ever be not only possible to love, but also the finest and purest form of its self-manifestation. There is indeed in this world love on which no shadow has yet fallen, but there is

¹ Hopkins, *System of Doctrines*, Part II, chap. iii.

no love which may not at any instant have to identify itself with the grief and pain and adversity and ill-desert of others, so sharing the suffering and evils of their condition. Thus love is essentially vicarious. In love suffering is forever immanent. Love is by its very nature pledged to sacrifice. Only by denying itself, in which case it would cease to be love, could it stand aloof from any human sorrow or sin. This principle was the burning motive of the Apostle's confession : " I am debtor both to Greek and to Barbarian, both to the wise and to the foolish."

Here we have the ultimate secret of the life and death of Jesus. Without stint, without cessation, with ever increasing fullness, he gave himself to all the needs of men. He himself offered many reasons for the necessity of his suffering. The Scriptures, which could not be broken, had declared that the Messiah must be a " suffering servant " (Matt. xxvi, 54 ; Luke xxii, 37). There was such a relation between his earthly life and his glory with the Father, that suffering was the unavoidable experience through which he must enter into the life of glory (Jno. xvii, 4, 5 ; cf. Luke xxiv, 26). He beheld himself, in virtue of his vocation, in such relations with his followers that he must die for the sake of protecting them ; because he is the good shepherd and not a hireling, he has in an hour of need to lay down his life for them (Jno. x, 11 ; cf. Luke xv, 4). He recognizes in himself a germinal power, which fulfills its promise not by isolated self-preservation, but through the self-surrender of its enveloping husk, its external form, in death ; if instead of abiding alone it will reappear in countless lives for good, it must die. To the foregoing must be added

that Jesus' cup of suffering was pressed to his lips by his Father's hand (Mark xiv, 35, 36).

What, then, is the import of this necessity appearing under such diverse forms in the consciousness of Jesus? It is to be traced to one source — the principle of love. The Scriptures of the Old Testament reached their highest development in the revelation of self-sacrifice in behalf of others. Since the glory of the Messiah was to be the bursting forth of the splendor of love, the way to it was simple — the way of love. If Jesus is the shepherd into whose hands the Father has intrusted the safety and well-being of the flock, then there is no point short of death at which his self-surrender may be arrested. It is the essence of love, as it is the essence of a grain of wheat, nay, as it is an ultimate law of all life, not to exist for itself as an isolated organism, but by surrender of all that separates itself from others, to find itself again in those in whom its true life appears. And finally, inasmuch as the will of God in Jesus is not an abstract, external power, but love, which is at the same time a revelation of the presence of God dwelling within him, the necessity of his suffering is grounded in the eternal nature of God.

From whatever point of view we interrogate the divine nature, we reach the same result. It is, first, impossible to conceive of love in God as an unexpressed or merely subconscious potency. We could form no idea of any property in God which, now active and manifest, is supposed to have been once absolutely quiescent. Granted that love is the crowning and highest attribute and name of God; there can never have been a time when it was latent, unless indeed we

are prepared to think of the divine being as in process of development. In that case we must conceive of him as having been at some time less than he is now, in some sense, too, less than God. But if we draw back from such a conclusion, one alternative alone remains — God is eternal love.

Secondly, if love is eternal in God, then the world is equally eternal with the divine love, and has its perpetual ground in the nature of God. It is his nature eternally to create, and by so doing to provide a form for his self-manifestation, a sphere for his self-impartation. Thus we conceive of God not as a bare Infinite, an unrelated Absolute, but as One whose self-consciousness is the unity of the divine and the human, the eternal ground of which nature and man are the ever changing finite forms.

Thirdly, neither the world nor any single part of it is isolated from God ; and God is not wrapped up in his own transcendence apart from the world. He lives in his creation, he identifies himself with it, he communicates himself to it, and in turn his consciousness takes up into itself and reflects the infinite phases of the world's life. The sun, pouring forth continuous light and heat, furnishes only an imperfect analogy of God and his love. It does indeed represent the impartiality of the divine goodness, but the comparison must not be pushed so far as to include indifference. The sun shines upon sea and mountain, upon arid plain and fertile field, upon glowing health and foul corruption, upon noble and also upon base deed, lighting the path of the philanthropist, and at the same time that of the robber and the assassin. The sun knows nothing and cares nothing about any of these

things. None of them mounts up to increase or to mar the splendor of his effulgence. In God, however, love is not simply a pouring out, but it involves perception of that to which it is directed. All the terms which we apply to God — unless they are to be evaporated into meaningless anthropomorphisms — stand for affections in God which correspond with actual needs and conditions of men : Fatherhood, compassion, long-suffering, forgiveness, comfort ; even anger and wrath represent realities in God, his intense and inappeasable moral reaction against sin. The life of God is different from what it would be were there no sin and waste in human life. Love in God implies a reciprocal relation between him and men. The sympathy of God means that in the divine self-consciousness there is room for the pain and sorrow and agonizing cry of all his creatures. Because he is infinite love, that is, pure spirit, not only is he capable of a life in the life of others, but he realizes his love, which is his life, in and through the existence of all finite being.

The suffering of Jesus — by which is meant his earthly life, “ becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross ” — falls within the scope of this law. It is never optional with love whether it shall give itself to its object or not ; because it is love, it knows no alternative. If, however, we seek for the nature of this necessity of love, we shall not discover it in the principle of obligation. Where perfect love is, it is idle to speak of obligation. Such a term may serve for those who are on the way to this supreme height, but once the height is reached, the sense of obligation is swallowed up in the consciousness of love ; the relation which had appeared in the lower ethical stages

in the form of obligation, instead of ceasing to exist, is revealed in the fullness and beauty of the unrestricted outflowing of love towards its object. Nor can we conceive of the necessity of the suffering of love, as if it arose from a dark background of compulsion from within, or from a reality or law outside of itself. For in the first case, this would be the discovery of an element of unreason or of fate, irreconcilable with the perfect freedom and blessedness which we attribute to God; and in the second case, it would set over against him a principle to which he is in some measure subject. But this cannot be. There is in the universe no reality higher than love. Nothing can, therefore, take precedence of it; it must be its own law and end.

The nature of love carries with it also the necessity that he who loves shall himself suffer with and in behalf of the one in need. The relation cannot be delegated. What would be impossible in the supreme hours of human experience would be likewise and for the same reason impossible for God. He does not send his Son to identify his life with the misery of our sinful lot, while he himself remains in undisturbed felicity. This would make the love of the Son more real than that of the Father, empty Gethsemane of more than half of its meaning, and leave us with a doctrine of God inferior to that of the Old Testament (cf. Is. lxiii, 7-9). Such a view would even rob God of the very felicity which is attributed to him; for if we conceive of him as love, and yet in virtue of any law of his being precluded from uniting himself with men in their guilt and wretchedness, we have introduced into the divine nature a principle of pure and perfect anguish.

We have now to consider the necessity of Christ's

suffering from the standpoint of those who are to be redeemed. If sin is to be atoned for, that is, if the disposition in which sin finds its home is to be reached by divine love and so transformed that sin shall be thoroughly and forever eradicated and become as if it had not been, this can be brought about only by one who by reason of his own suffering enters into the deepest springs of suffering which sin, and indeed any form of earthly experience, has opened in the human heart.

Theologians have in every age of the church laid hold of this truth. The Apostle struck this clear note in his judgment that in the death of one all died; the aim of that death was that they who live shall "no longer live unto themselves, but unto him who for their sakes died and rose again" (2 Cor. v, 14, 15). The doctrine of Christ's work as a satisfaction, as an expiation, as a sacrifice, has gained all its significance from this conception. Christ must suffer all, or an equivalent of all, that man has to suffer for his sin. Because men were supposed to be under the power of Satan, he also must be given into the hand of the evil one. Because physical death was regarded as a penalty of sin,—the more violent the death, the greater its witness to the displeasure of God,—therefore Christ must undergo the unspeakable agony of the cross. Since, on account of the guilt of sin, all men were justly exposed to the wrath of God, and were themselves unable to remove the ground of this hostility, Christ must in the stead of sinners be subject to the utmost penal wrath of God, namely, the withdrawal of the Father's sustaining presence, that so the sin of the world might be expiated.

In these presentations, whether it was claimed that

Jesus endured the identical punishment or an equivalent of the punishment due to man's sin, one and the same motive has ruled. Under whatever of misrepresentation and hence of exaggeration of its proper scope this truth of identity has been set forth, due in part to a too literal interpretation of the Scriptures and in part to defective ethical ideals, yet this fact only witnesses to the enduring vitality and worth of the principle, and to the place it has made for itself in the consciousness of the church. The significance of these doctrinal forms which have so widely dominated Christian theology lies in their insistence that he who is to redeem us must be a person in no respect alien to our nature and experience, but at one with us in the deepest realities of our human life. We need to recognize the lasting debt owed to those theologians who have clung to this truth of identity of Christ with men in his suffering and death, even though in forms of statement no longer real to our moral sense. It is our task, while holding fast to the same principle of identity with a tenacity hitherto unexcelled, to relieve the description of its objectionable features, and thus to set it free for its saving work unhindered by irrelevant and unethical accretions.

If we make our appeal to Christian experience, we discover that the mightiest motive to those who have become followers of Christ is that he who redeemed them had entered perfectly into the wretchedness of their sinful state, and made his appeal to them from thence no less than from his throne in glory. It is this feeling to which such beautiful expression is given in the Song of the Suffering Servant in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, in the deep refrain, "He hath borne

our griefs and carried our sorrows," that has made these words among the most sacred in the language, to be read in the hushed and solemn hour of the Holy Communion as a perfect description of the sacrifice of our Lord and a resistless appeal to Christian gratitude and service. An even finer expression of this consciousness and its import is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii, 9-18; iv, 14-16; v, 5-10). The great hymns of the church have voiced the same feeling. Sinners the most hardened, as well as saints from whose faces streams the radiance of Christ's transforming love, confess that the secret of his power lies in having touched their lives at the deepest point through suffering in their behalf. This has also been the most potent motive for the propagation of the gospel (2 Cor. v, 14), and is the central note of the redeemed in heaven (Rev. v, 9-14).

In whatever form this suffering has been conceived, whether as punishment or penalty, or as having its root in sympathy; whether it has been regarded as physical agony, as the hiding of the Father's face, or as bodily death; under every form of picturing it, Christ is thought of as suffering in man's place, in some sense what man must have suffered, the just for the unjust; "who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree." Theories have been proposed concerning the insusceptibility of the divine nature to suffering, and concerning the relation of the divine to the human nature of Christ, according to which the human nature alone experienced humiliation and suffering; the suffering has even been characterized as infinite to correspond with the infinite nature of sin, or with the infinite nature of him who suffered and died. But in

all conceptions alike there is the dominant note that in the experience of him who was the Saviour of men there was a suffering deeper than that to which any other person was ever subject, and through the suffering came redemption.

If in love, therefore, is found the principle of the atonement, the method is plain. In the process of redemption, one has suffered not merely in behalf of, or instead of, but with others — with all others — for the sake of reconciling them to God. Never was reality more simple ; yet its very simplicity has been a stumbling-block. Because men feared that love was lacking in moral stamina or in juridical content, they have shrunk from a conception of its all-sufficiency. As of old, unable to discern the mighty power of the gospel in the simple identification of Jesus with men in the suffering entailed by sin, they have too often sought for “ signs ” or for “ wisdom ” which was either unreal or irrelevant. In quest of the mystery of the cross, theologians have ascended into heaven, they have descended into the abyss, apparently unaware that it was nigh them, and that they had only to look into their own hearts to find the secret laid bare. It is the “ old, old story,” the simple way of love. It seems strange indeed that if the meaning of the atonement is to be discovered in human analogies, that meaning should be sought in some transaction with reference to Satan, or to injured personal honor, or to maintenance of moral government, instead of looking for it in the commonest, the most precious and pervasive of human relationships — that of fatherhood, in which is naturally included the entire parental relation to the child. And if redemption is what the Scriptures and

the church and Christian experience profess, namely, the supreme manifestation of divine love, then in love itself, unaided and without supplement by any other moral quality, must be sought the principle and the method of it.

What, then, is the method of love? What indeed but that which belongs to the nature of love as it is revealed in human fatherhood? It is the method of the shepherd, of the woman sweeping her house, of the Good Samaritan, in a word, of Jesus himself, who actually sought and saved the lost. To withhold no sympathy, and no suffering, and no sacrifice, if so be that by the giving of self the one who is loved may be brought to the best and highest in personal life — this is love's way. This is done and can be done along only one path — the personal contact and sacrifice of love. Just as Jesus took the common food of the daily meal — the bread and the wine — and showed in them the possibility of the most sacred service, so he revealed, in the love which is a common good of human life, a principle capable of universal redeeming ministry.

There is profound truth in the view of Schleiermacher, that Christ's redeeming activity consisted in his taking believers up into the power of his God-consciousness; and that springing out of this was his atoning activity, in which he lifted his followers into the fellowship of his sunny blessedness. The significance of Christ's sufferings, not as individualized but in their totality, lies in this, that they were the means through which his blessedness was revealed as infinitely superior to the greatest suffering. He who enters into fellowship with Christ no longer feels evil as punish-

ment. The results of the atoning activity are the sense of sins forgiven, peace with God, and blessedness. Thus the essential principle of this view is that Christ is the head of the community, and that the renewed life is one in union with him.

If love is, therefore, the principle and method of the atonement, then several important consequences follow. (1) Christ's redeeming activity must be sought not merely in his death, but also in his life. No one doubts that in his ministry his redeeming power is manifest in uncounted ways. Nor can it be rightly claimed that when Jesus during his lifetime delivered sinners from the thrall of their sins — the man borne of four, the woman in Simon's house, the man with an unclean spirit, and Zacchæus — his action was only preliminary to what he was afterward to accomplish on the cross. It is alleged that at the time when Jesus spoke the words of pardon to these individuals, he was still in the flesh, and that all such forgiveness, like that of prophetic absolution, as of Nathan to David (2 Sam. xii, 13), pointed forward to an atonement yet to be effected in the death of Christ. There is indeed no reference in the words of Jesus to connect pardon in this manner with his death; but we are told that such an allusion would have been unmeaning, since its significance could only be unfolded later, when the Holy Spirit had laid bare the import of Jesus' death. Thus forgiveness of sin, before the coming of Christ, whether that of Israel or of the Gentiles, takes place in prospective regard for an expiation to be realized in the death of Christ.

Such a view has, however, no support in the New Testament, and in the nature of the case no reason

can be adduced for its validity. It is of a piece with the Roman Catholic doctrine of the *limbus patrum*, and stands or falls with the arguments for that position. "Apart from us they are not made perfect," and God's partial disclosure of grace to them was to be followed by more complete revelation of his love to those who came afterward; but this is not the same as to hold that an objective atonement, accomplished in a given time and place on the earth, was the ground on which the Father vouchsafed an increasing but always imperfect measure of goodness to his chosen people and to men of every nation. Rather was the constant outgoing of Jesus' personal life to meet the cry of human need itself redemptive, and its power was shown in the new life wakened in those who responded to him. One has but to read the breathless story of Mark, meagre as it is, every word pulsing with divine power, to discover that from the very outset of Jesus' ministry virtue went forth from him to heal, to help, to save with respect of every human ill. In the work of Christ we cannot regard one moment as more necessary than another — the public teaching than the baptism, the violent death than the quiet ministry in Galilee. The cross was indeed the point in his experience where the inexhaustible love burst forth most perfectly in and through the human life. The historical beginning, however, was not there, but in the birth of the Saviour, and it was shown evermore adequately as the ministry of grace proceeded, until it reached its culmination in the tragedy of the crucifixion. Calvin, in answer to the question, Wherein lay the virtue of Christ's work? replied, "In the whole course of his obedience;" and he adds: "From the time of his assum-

ing the form of a servant, he began to pay the price of our deliverance to redeem us. . . . Even in the death of Christ, the voluntary submission is the principal circumstance.”¹

(2) The very essence of the atonement is found in the incarnation. The reconciliation is brought about not so much by specific things which Jesus did or suffered, as by the simple fact that the divine and the human, in others separated by reason of sin, are in him perfectly and forever one. This conception of the atonement as consisting in the incarnation is by no means new, but has been advocated from different points of view by many writers in the past sixty years.² In the new emphasis laid upon the human aspect of the life of Christ, such a doctrine was inevitable. Its distinctive merit is that it takes the work of Christ out of the barren desert of legalism or of speculative thought, in a word, of unreality, and plants it where it belongs, in the field of life.

(3) The atonement is no unintelligible process, real for a transcendent world, but incomprehensible for plain mortals. Philosophy does not help us here. No other light is needed than the universal principle of love. We have seen how this principle enters into the very structure of the world, of society, and of personal life. In all ages of the church there have been uncounted disciples to whom theories of the atonement have been an unknown tongue, or a medley of incoherent elements, or a doctrine implicitly received

¹ *Institutes*, Book II, chap. xvi, 5.

² Maurice, *Theological Essays*, VII, p. 126; Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, vol. i, p. 213; Robertson, *Sermons*, First Series, IX, Second Series, VII.

on the authority of great names. Yet with or without theories, the simple life and death of Christ have continued with unabated efficacy to be the power of reconciling men to God; with or without theories, — and in no two centuries have these remained the same, — men have found here the supreme revelation of the divine sympathy and grace. Wherever this deed has become known, every other kind of bloody expiation for sin has ceased. Following the example of the Saviour himself, men have interpreted this reality by human analogies (Jno. x, 14, 15; xii, 24), and in these rather than in the formulas of the schools, have found the meaning of redemption. In Jesus they have discovered in a superlative degree suffering and sacrifice in behalf of others, and have felt that somehow on account of it they held a different relation towards God; and this feeling has been right. It is the intuition of love. So far as the work of Christ is interpreted by love as a key — but also only so far — it becomes intelligible.

(4) Christ has, therefore, done for men what every man, in principle at least, ought to do for others. He draws them into the sweep of his own mighty sacrifice, wherein each one according to his vocation will serve and suffer for others. This note is often struck in the New Testament. Jesus in his reply to John and James, “My cup ye shall indeed drink;” Peter and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in their description of the suffering and rewards of Christians, “partakers of Christ’s sufferings,” “bearing his reproach;” and also Paul, “I rejoice in my sufferings, . . . and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh,” all give expression to this profound law. This last means not that anything is lacking in Christ’s

personal work which is to be completed by the suffering of his followers, "for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x, 14); but that in the historical realization of redemption, by virtue of the ethical identity between the Master and his followers, they must share to the utmost the service, and if need be the suffering, by which the Saviour is drawing men out of sin into fellowship with God (Matt. x, 24, 25; Rom. viii, 17).

(5) Once more, the atonement is to be conceived of not simply as "objective," complete in itself, but as one element in the redemptive process by which God is uniting the world to himself. Three reasons, however, from different points of view, have been adduced for an objective atonement: the necessity for a satisfaction to the penal justice of God as condition of offering pardon; the necessity of vindicating the government of God, ere sin is forgiven; and the necessity of guarding the character of God from the suspicion that he is not a God that "hateth iniquity." The atonement is, however, to be regarded from another point of view. It is not an isolated reality. So far as the work of Christ on earth is concerned, it was one stage of the process of redemption — the historical revelation of God in personal form with reference to human sin (Jno. xvii, 4; xix, 30). Yet this work is not to be severed from the larger circle of the divine redeeming activity both before and since Christ. We are rather to conceive of all that God is doing for the salvation of the world as a unity. We may for the sake of convenience consider one by one the several aspects of this reality, but never without remembering that each of these is an integral part of one whole.

If, therefore, we think of the actual mediation of the grace of God through Christ's life on earth, we must say that it was partial. If, moreover, we consider the actual number of persons to whom since the ascension the gracious message of the cross has come, we must again confess that it is limited. But, on the one hand, we could not on this account be driven to a doctrine of restricted atonement, or rest such a doctrine on the selective sovereignty of God. It is the tendency of the love of God in Christ, wherever it is known, to lead men through renunciation of sin into a life like that of Christ—of communion with God; that all men are not thus drawn is explained in part by the fact that Christianity is a historical religion. The self-disclosure of the divine love in Christ, however, reveals the unqualified universality of the purpose of grace. On the other hand, we have to remind ourselves that God has modes of gracious approach to sinful men which for us are not as yet visibly connected with the historical ministration of the gospel. But we cannot doubt that from Christ as a redemptive centre the grace of God is progressively and completely to penetrate human society (Matt. xiii, 33; Jno. xii, 32). The means of its extension, its relation to redemptive forces among peoples to whom the knowledge of the gospel has not yet come, and the range of its possible operation outside of the brief span of man's earthly life, are questions to be discussed in their proper place.

There is, however, a deep truth in the doctrine of the atonement as objective. The ethical and spiritual world can never be the same again as it was before God was in Christ reconciling it to himself. It has been lifted to a higher plane, it is in possession of

loftier ideals, it is confronted with wider and more serious tasks, it fulfills its vocation under the inspiration of mightier motives than man was conscious of before. If one traces in the conquests of Alexander the beginning of our modern social order, and in Plato the emergence of those ideas which have since ruled in the world of speculative thought; if every hero and every noble deed infuses a new virtue into humanity, by which it is quickened for the realization of its ideal destiny, why should it be deemed strange that Jesus Christ, "the holiest among the mighty, the mightiest among the holy," created a new moral and religious environment for the human race? The contention is, therefore, valid that "the race with Christ in it is different from the race without Christ;" it lives in a new sense of the Fatherhood of God, and in a new feeling of sin; it occupies a changed relation toward the potentialities of its own nature; indeed, the entire circle of ethical and spiritual interests has been lifted into a new and higher region. Forms of evil once common have wholly disappeared; others still in existence have been put under the ban of the public conscience. Even if there are new violations of the moral order which were unknown to antiquity, yet the redemptive forces of modern society, which owe their sole origin to Christ, are incalculable both in number and in might. To compare small things with great, as, since Copernicus, every child is born into a new astronomical world, since Columbus into a new geographical world, since Harvey into a new physiological world, since Darwin into a new biological world, so, since Christ, every one is born into a new moral and religious, that is, redemptive world. The momentum

of this divine force has neither spent itself nor reached its highest point; year by year and from age to age society is transformed by the power of the gospel, and it becomes the home of ever more potent influences for carrying to its perfection the saving work of Christ.

What Christ did for men, therefore, can never be undone; nor can men ever become oblivious to the new moral motive power which they owe to him, or sink back into the condition of the world before Christ.

(6) A final aspect of the work of Christ which is to be distinguished from an "objective" atonement is the reconciliation which the New Testament makes an integral part of that work. One imperfectly conceives the atonement if he thinks of it as simply a provision for pardon, or only that which makes salvation possible. We have rather to regard it as that which actually breaks down the power of sin in man and draws him into filial relation with God. This corresponds with the teaching of Paul. According to him, redemption includes forgiveness, that is, deliverance from the bondage of sin (Eph. i, 7; Rom. iii, 24); mystical fellowship between Christ and men established through his death, wherein his act of ethical self-surrender becomes the act of all (2 Cor. v, 14, 15); and an association of the work of Christ with both the justifying and the sanctifying power of God in the new life (Rom. v, 10, 11).

Thus the reconciling activity of Christ is perpetual. There is, as just indicated, an increasing penetration of the social organism and dominion therein by the ethical and spiritual ideals which originated in him, in the creation of a redemptive environment. Even if one

holds that the entire value of Christ for man's redemption is to be limited to the earthly life of the Saviour, it must still be admitted that his earthly activity has set in motion forces of redemption which according to the law of influence must operate as long as sin continues. Moreover, the perpetual personal activity of the living Christ carries forward his redemptive agency from the unseen world. That portion of the Christian church which finds in the daily celebration of the mass — an unbloody offering — a repetition of Christ's earthly sacrifice for sin is clinging to a profound truth. The Roman Catholic doctrine emphasizes three indispensable elements of the reality of Christian faith: the initial relation of the forgiveness of sins to the sacrifice of Christ; the continued dependence of the soul on the same unchanging divine grace; and the perpetual power of the living Christ by which the union of the soul with God is perfected. Thus there is not one sacrifice or grace for the beginning, another wholly different one for the maintenance and completion of the renewed life. Although on earth Jesus had revealed God and identified himself with men in the highest degree possible through a human form, yet after his death his redeeming work awaited perfect realization. Under other and indeed more favorable conditions, but still according to the same principle of love, he is not to cease his redeeming activity until he brings about the final unity of the kingdom of God (1 Cor. xv, 24-28). In the New Testament, this unceasing ministry of the glorified Christ is represented under many forms, which may in general be reduced to two: with reference to those who are not yet reconciled to God (Jno. x, 16); and as helping the reconciled but still

tempted and suffering ones in all the circumstances of their need (Matt. xviii, 20 ; Acts ii, 33 ; Heb. ii, 18 ; iv, 14-16 ; vii, 17 ; 1 Jno. ii, 1).

The position that Christ's reconciling activity is perpetual is confirmed by two further facts: (1) as the self-revealing principle of the divine nature, the Son carries forward his work of unveiling God to men. The "true light," in which was the progressive manifestation of God to every individual man, of which all human ideas of God from the first dawnings of consciousness of the divine have been but partial reflections, shone forth in grace and truth in Jesus Christ. That disclosure of God which appears in all the life of nature and in the religious consciousness of the race, which came to its perfect expression in Christ, does not cease with his departure into the unseen world, but, just because his bodily presence is withdrawn, energizes ever more mightily to reveal the true nature of God to men. The essential character of this revelation is redemptive.

(2) Since the nature of Christ was love, we cannot conceive of him as inactive in relation to men. Those representations of him in the New Testament, in which he appears as sitting on the right hand of God, — his earthly work completed, — are not to be flattened to a literal interpretation. The reference is rather to his unique dignity as exalted, in contrast with his lowly form while on earth. It was impossible that he whose love had without beginning found expression in all the life of the world should, in three short years of earthly ministry, exhaust either its impulse, its opportunity, or its efficiency. The truth further enshrined in his standing at the right hand of God is

that his activity has now entered upon its highest and final form. Henceforth his love is an omnipotent and therefore conquering love. Nor may we in another way escape the implications of this truth, namely, by transferring the activity of the Son to the Holy Spirit. This makes the Spirit the earthly representative of the exalted Lord, but the New Testament writers in every way guard us from the supposition that Christ is separated from the Spirit in his work — himself inactive, while the Spirit carries forward redemption among men. If Jesus says that he will send the Spirit, he also declares that he will himself come to the disciples as an abiding presence. Paul affirms that although Christ is the exalted Lord, yet as such, on the one hand, he intercedes for his own, and, on the other hand, lives in his followers, the quickening and the inspiring power of their life (Gal. ii, 20). He is even called "the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii, 17). If we were to picture Christ as idle while the Spirit alone is active on earth, we should, in the case of Christ, only renew the mistake which, in the case of the Father as himself impassive yet sending the Son, we repudiated. As a result of this consideration two truths are clear: Christ continues his reconciling ministry for men; and the nature of this ministry is essentially the same as that of his earthly life.

Three further questions require discussion. (1) In what sense is Christ's work a satisfaction in respect to the divine nature? The notion of a satisfaction offered to the injured honor or to the violated justice or law of God was the key to the meaning of the atonement as held by Anselm and the old Protestant divines. In the form, however, in which they elaborated it, it fails

to answer the demands either of the Scriptures, or of a rational view of God, or of the facts of Christian experience. The Scriptures know nothing of a God who can forgive only after certain supposed requirements of his ethical nature have been appeased, or of any equivalent which is substituted in the will of God for the punishment of man's sin. The prophetic consciousness is perfectly explicit concerning this, as may be seen by reference to the plain teaching of an Isaiah or a Micah. Jesus knows only that through him, in his ever-deepening identification with men, is revealed the Father's loving will that the sinner renounce his sin and reunite himself with the Father. He never speaks of his death or even of his suffering as a preliminary condition of God's coming to men in forgiveness, but rather that through his life and death the Father actually enters perfectly into human life.

If, moreover, God is such a Being as our truest thought of him expresses, then, first, he is love, and secondly, his forgiveness is such as is possible to love. Absolution from punishment, based on satisfaction rendered by another, may or may not be an act of justice; it cannot be an act of love.

Furthermore, experience testifies that the highest forgiveness of one man by another has its principle not in preliminary satisfaction rendered to an alleged demand of the ethical nature, but in such an identification of the injured party with him who has done the wrong, that he may, on the one hand, himself suffer and thus reveal the consequences and the awful nature of evil done, and, on the other hand, communicate to that other his own loving spirit, and so win him back to a better mind. Christian experience declares also

that the penalty of sin has not been removed in the manner which this doctrine of satisfaction implies. If guilt is the penalty of sin, and is not objective but inherent in the character, indeed is the character, and if its principle is the denial and thus the want of the filial spirit which belongs to man in his relation to God, then this can be removed only by such a revelation of God as Father as will waken within the sinner both abhorrence of his sin and love which responds to the love of his Father — a change of character. Absolutely the only power which can call forth love in man is love, and the highest love is kindled by the highest love. But for the prodigal's certainty — inadequate though it was — of his Father's love, he never would have returned; and the Father on his part knew of no satisfaction as condition of forgiveness, but only of satisfaction in the revelation of his love in welcoming his penitent son to his heart and home.

Yet this term, satisfaction, in relation to the work of Christ, is not to be given up without further ado. It stands for a great reality in redemption. Both in the history of the doctrine of redemption and in our rational unfolding of this doctrine, it is of the utmost importance to affirm that in the reconciliation of sinners to himself, God's ethical nature is satisfied. The meaning of this demand is, however, to be sought not in quasi-commercial relations, but in the perfection of God as love. Thus the satisfaction of the ethical nature of God is realized in three respects: (a) so far as there has been given in Christ an adequate expression of the divine character and of the divine love in relation to sin, as well as a disclosure of the nature of sin and of God's hostility to it; (b) not when the

Father can see in another than the sinner the suffering and death which belong to sin, but when he can forgive and restore his child to his loving fellowship; (c) God will be perfectly satisfied when the divine purpose of grace manifested through the death of Christ shall have found in all souls a perfect Amen (Is. liii, 11; cf. 2 Cor. i, 20).

(2) In what sense is the work of Christ a substitution? Resting on a literal interpretation of single words in the New Testament, and clothed in forms of thought which belong to legal and other allied relations, the idea of substitution has persisted throughout all the history of the church. This fact invites us to penetrate more deeply into the reality of Christ's work for men from the point of view here indicated. In the New Testament we do not find substitution in the traditional form of conceiving it, and indeed not in any strict sense. Christ's physical death does not abolish the necessity of our dying. He was not punished in our stead, nor was the guilt of our sin transferred to him. Our sufferings, so far as these are the natural consequences of sin, are not removed by reason of his sufferings. On the other hand, that in the work of Christ we find substitution cannot be doubted, and the truth for which men have contended is secure upon an immovable foundation. In his entrance into the conditions of human life, he spared himself no suffering which holy love could take upon itself through limitless sympathy and surrender to the evils of our earthly lot. He subjected himself to the utmost violence of sinful men, and that too for the sake of others. He endured sufferings with the full consciousness that they were experienced on behalf

of others. Again, if he had not died, we must have died (Matt. xx, 28 ; 2 Cor. v, 14-18). But for him, therefore, we must have been in an immeasurably worse state, under bondage to sin and victims of suffering from which we are now free. Still further, this principle of substitution is only another way of stating the law of love. According to its eternal and inviolable nature, love is vicarious. That mystical relation of which Jesus speaks in the upper chamber and to which Paul so often refers finds its analogies in the constitution of the natural world, its expression in the moral life of men, its ultimate source and home in the bosom of God. In the Apostle's profound statement just referred to, as to the substitutionary import of the death of Christ, is a law which must indeed be interpreted by the spiritual imagination, but its truth both conditions and fulfills itself in Christian experience.

(3) What is the relation of the work of Christ to the wiping out of sin? First, it is evident that we do not conceive of it simply as that which makes the forgiveness of sin possible, but rather as the deed in which God comes to men with the forgiveness of sin. What the sinner burdened with the anguish of his guilt needs is not merely to know that Christ has made it possible for God to pardon his sin, but above all this, that God in Christ comes to him with reconciliation and eternal life. Otherwise, he is only aware that God can, not that he does, forgive sin. Herein lies the strength of that greatest word of Paul : " God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses " (2 Cor. v, 19) ; herein, too, is felt the import of the self-testimony of

Jesus: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke xix, 10).

Secondly, the effect of Christ's work on the consequences of sin may be regarded from either of two points of view, — those which flow from sin into outward circumstances, and those which appear in the character which is the personal product and exponent of sin. Now whatever may be true of the sinner's circumstances, his supreme need is that of moral and spiritual reconciliation with God (Mark ii, 9–11). Since the necessity of redemption lies in an unfilial disposition, the work of Christ is aimed first of all at the heart, the centre and source of evil. Here guilt — the habitual spirit of alienation from God — must be met and overcome. When the vital relations between God and man which have been disturbed by sin are restored, the other consequences of sin — in the secondary elements of character and in external conditions of existence — are left to the ordinary laws of God's providence, the law of cause and effect, the law of growth, the law of habit, and the law of social reintegration under the gospel.

Thirdly, the work of Christ is directed to nothing less than the complete abolition of sin. The reconciling agency of the Saviour, of which the earthly ministry is conceived as one factor, — a revelation of the nature and a pledge of the infinite sincerity of the divine grace, — is to continue as long as there remains any sin which it can overcome. Its power is shown first in the new consciousness of sin which it evokes in the spirit of man. It is further manifested in breaking down the barrier which sin erects between the soul and God, that is, in the forgiveness of sin.

It is still further evident in the organization of a personality according to the law of Christ, wherein the old, so far as it was sinful, gives place to the new principle and spirit of life. Finally, when all souls are completely responsive to the divine good-will, and humanity has become a body in which God perfectly dwells and rules, — every trace of sin having utterly disappeared, — then will the redemptive action of the Son of God have attained its eternal consummation (1 Cor. xv, 24–28).

The Apostle Paul has raised a further question concerning a cosmic relation of the atonement (Col. i, 20 ; Eph. i, 10). He beholds in the death of Christ a reconciliation of the whole creation which had been estranged from God by sin. In this view he includes men and earthly things, and even angelic beings who had fallen away from the good. Into this latter subject we cannot enter. So far as this position witnesses to the conviction that Christ's redemption of man is no isolated law of the relation of God to the universe, but has reality wherever moral beings exist, it is "worthy of all acceptance." If, therefore, there is sin in any other part of God's universe, he is not indifferent to it, but both by the providential order of the creation and by the mighty persuasives of love, of which the cross is for us the supreme instance, he energizes for its eradication. We are not, however, in a position to know that the earthly work of Christ as a definite historical fact had significance for other worlds than our own, or if it had, what was the nature of that significance.

In closing this part of our discussion, reference may be made to two dangers which we have sought to

avoid. One of these is connected with sin, the other with analogies which sustain no relation to redemption. There are, for example, so-called "deep" views of sin, which exhibit man as in a condition from which he can be extricated not by grace, but only by miraculous intervention. There are also shallow notions of sin, according to which there remains nothing for God and little for man to do. Moreover, there are theories of the atonement which can be only partially brought into ethical relations with sin and grace. Whatever exceptions in other respects have been taken to the teachings of the Apostles, no one has ever charged them with either exaggerating or minimizing the power and consequences of sin, or with mistaking the infinite significance of God's gift of his Son for the salvation of man. Although they supposed that sin was to be overcome more quickly or in a different manner than has actually been the case, yet they had no remedy for it save one — that which would completely conquer and eradicate it in man's moral nature. Any view of the work of Christ which makes light of either sin or grace — treating sin as superficial and comparatively harmless, and not as "the oldest custom of the race" and the most awful evil under which man suffers, and regarding grace as anything short of God's last and mightiest remedy for the otherwise incurable malady of sin — finds no support in Apostolic teaching nor any justification in Christian experience. Sin and grace are correlative; and even if "where sin abounded, grace did abound more exceedingly," still the sin requires just that grace, and the grace is the one all-sufficing and sovereign cure for the sin.

VIII

IDENTIFICATION OF MEN WITH CHRIST: I. — THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW LIFE

“HE was manifested to take away sins.” We have already considered the nature of sin, and also what Christ did through his earthly life to destroy sin by the reconciliation of men to God. We have now to trace the stages in which this redemptive aim is realized. For convenience these may be divided into two, of which one involves the beginning of the life according to Christ, the other includes the progressive development of that life.

Our first task, therefore, will be to describe the beginning of the new life, the forms under which it appears, the principles underlying it, and the part which the divine and the human action respectively play in its origination. Our discussion will include the following topics in the order named: the beginning of the new life through Christian nurture in adolescence; adult conversion; the relation of the new life to personality; to the person and work of Christ; to the forgiveness of sins; to the life of the community; and to the Holy Spirit.

I. According to the divine ideal, the beginning of the new life in Christian nurture is grounded in two postulates. First, every one is by nature a child of God. Secondly, the child is never to know any other than a filial, that is, a natural relation to God.

We have, then, to inquire what we mean by "nature." Among the several notions which are connected with this term, we select the following for consideration, — all of which are drawn from the scriptural use. (1) Nature signifies the essential properties by which a being is constituted what it is in distinction from any other kind of being. (2) The nature of man includes those instincts and tendencies by which he is actuated, irrespective of the gospel. Thus the Gentiles do "by nature" the will of God (Rom. ii, 14). (3) Nature is the human personality, so far as this is unrenewed by the Spirit of God. The Apostle alludes to this in the saying, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God;" and again, "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural." Jesus also speaks of it, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John iii, 6; cf. 1 Cor. ii, 14; xv, 46). There is here no doctrine of nature as evil or as alienated from God. The meaning is, that there are two aspects of every human life — a physical and a spiritual, a lower and a higher. Through birth of the flesh, one is introduced into a world of the senses or the temporal order of existence; through a later awakening of the spirit, one becomes aware of the eternal realities. (4) Nature stands for those inclinations and tendencies by which one person is differenced from another, or, more particularly, the bent of every one toward good and evil. This may be conceived of in two ways: first, as that aspect of the nature of man in which the prevailing bias toward evil has been produced by wrong choice. "We were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest" (Eph. ii, 3). Here the reference is to a second nature, an habitual moral

condition established by long-continued surrender to sinful courses of life. But since this is true only of mature persons and has no bearing on the character of children, we are not further concerned with it in this connection. We turn, therefore, to the other aspect of this matter, and ask whether the nature of children is accurately described as simply an inherent inclination and tendency to sin. Such a doctrine has indeed been held. It is, however, capable of defense neither by experience, nor by psychology, nor by the Scriptures.

Experience knows nothing of children with the character alleged. The child has by birth no character which makes him an object of either divine ethical approval or disapproval. The character is yet to be formed. Every element of the nature, whether good or bad, received by heredity, becomes one's own only so far as in its emergence into consciousness it is definitely accepted or rejected as an integral part of the freely unfolding life. Inherited nature is, therefore, related to character not as necessity, nor even as coercion, but as providing the raw material from which the spirit shapes the living personality.

The psychology of religion, which has recently begun to investigate the nature of the transition from the moral and spiritual consciousness of childhood to the mature acceptance of the will of God, has shown the impregnability of the following positions: (1) In children there are tendencies to good as well as propensities to evil. If, on the one hand, there is no individual with but a single bias toward either good or evil, on the other hand, every child is aware of himself not only as he actually is, but also in part as he ought ideally to become.

(2) The student of the psychology of religion comes upon many instances where, without violence and even without struggle, the soul enters gradually, almost imperceptibly, into the experience of the new life. In such cases, no presupposition of inherited depravity is required, nor is the teaching warranted that the Christian experience has been reached through renunciation of sin. In these children the beginning of the new life is connected with the awakening of aspiration for the good and the true, with the quickening of the desire to please God or Christ, with the feeling that at each stage of growth religion satisfies a developing sense of moral and spiritual need. Grown to mature life, however they may strain their gaze backward through those early formative years, they can recall no event, no crisis, by which they entered the kingdom of God. They never have known any other life. Thus the testimony of science and the vision of the poet agree.

“Heaven lies about us in our infancy.”¹

(3) Even if children escape the fierce struggle which arises from the sharp antithesis of sin and grace, and which often forms the prelude to the mature man's conversion, yet born as they are to a divided nature, they cannot avoid the necessity of moral conflict. This, however, instead of being for them a pre-Christian experience, emerges at later stages of personal development. In those later crises the early choice will be tested and confirmed. Yet the origin of the struggle is not in the nature as sinful, but in the opposite and apparently contradictory claims of one as against another portion of the nature. Powers which are yet to awaken

¹ *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality.*

in the unfolding being will surrender themselves to the leadership of a single master-principle only after the opposition which is set up in their initial self-assertion is overcome and they take their place as subordinate forces in a unifying development. This conflict is inevitable ; no life was ever completed without it. In the case of Jesus, even, it was wrought out in anguish of spirit, through "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears" (Heb. v, 7).

(4) What is called conversion, or the awakening and response to a world of spiritual reality, is a distinctively adolescent phenomenon. It is not, indeed, limited to this period, but its normal appearance is at this time. This experience of the religious nature follows in part the same laws which rule in other aspects of our nature. The years of adolescence are the springtime of life ; then all the capacities of the being tend to push forth, not indeed in the same order in all persons, but in some, by reason of special susceptibility or a peculiar training or unique experience, the spiritual may burst into bloom earlier than in others. Yet whether the age be five or seventeen years, the entrance of the child into the new life is not so much a change as a first beginning of moral character, thus an awakening of the soul to realities of which it was before oblivious, at a time in its personal history most suitable to its ideal development.

In our appeal to the Scriptures we are struck by two features : (1) the absence of any doctrine of children inheriting a sinful nature ; (2) the institutions, such as circumcision, the feasts of the Jewish year, and the synagogue schools ; the precepts, such as those in Deut. vi, 6-9 ; Prov. i-viii, xxii, 6 ; and many

examples of children under religious nurture, such as those of Abraham's household and others, imply that the nature of the child, instead of being sinful, is especially susceptible to divine influences, and under pious training responsive to the will of God. The didactic portions of the Scriptures leave much to be desired in the way of explicit representation both as to the nature and as to the training of children, but the little they do contain is in perfect harmony with experience and psychology. The silences of the New Testament on this subject are easily explained, so far at least as the teaching of the Apostles is concerned. The letters of the Apostles were addressed to churches already formed, and dealt with practical problems which arose in the several communities, or with the great outstanding principles of the gospel, yet only as these had immediate bearing on the spiritual needs of the readers. We cannot doubt, however, that the Christian churches carried over into the new order the careful nurture of child life which was so characteristic a feature of the Hebrew commonwealth. The words of Jesus, although for the most part concerned with mature people, contain three pearls of priceless worth. First, his rebuke to the disciples who would keep far from him the little ones brought by their mothers, "Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God" (Mark x, 14). Secondly, his sublime lesson on greatness and humility, "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii, 3). Thirdly, his revelation of the sacredness of child life, "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father

which is in heaven" (Matt. xviii, 10). Whatever injustice theological systems have done to children, and however these may appeal to a philosophy of the race which is no longer tenable, or attempt to interpret the innocent consciousness of children by the experience of adult and hardened sinners, yet these words of Jesus remain an infallible witness that, in his view at least, the nature of children is not sinful, but is well pleasing to the Heavenly Father.

II. On the subject of adult conversion, we have first to inquire what the Scriptures have to say concerning it. The silence of the Old Testament as to this matter is due in part to the genius of the Old Dispensation, and in part to the social rather than the individual character of the change which was to be experienced by those people who embraced the Hebrew faith. The religious life of the Israelites was provided for in two general ways: for the children and youth, in the institutions by means of which, as we have seen, they were introduced into the beliefs and customs of their fathers. For those who had turned aside from the paths of righteousness into a wicked life, there was under the prophets a call to a hearty renunciation of sin and obedience to the will of God, under the priesthood a careful system of sacrifices. In the case of the heathen, conversion was at one time national rather than individual; later, under a vigorous missionary impulse, it was to be to "the one and only spiritual God, creator of heaven and earth, with his holy moral law."¹

In the New Testament, however, we meet with a definite idea of the *rationale* of conversion. The Jew

¹ Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i, p. 12, Eng. tr.

who was a devout Israelite was called upon to realize only the implications of his national faith—to accept Jesus as the Chosen One. Here is properly no conversion. But in the case of those Jews who, like many of the Pharisees and the publicans and outcasts, were living in opposition to the will of God, and the Gentiles “having no hope and without God in the world” (Eph. ii, 12), the change from the old order to the new was nothing less than conversion. It was a distinctly adult phenomenon. It occurred in those who were capable of giving to the gospel as preached an intelligent hearing and a voluntary obedience. That in these persons it was a radical change is evident in the terms by which it is described: repentance or change of mind, regeneration, renewing. The figures employed to denote the change are likewise significant: passing out of death into life; delivered out of the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his Son; putting off the old man, and putting on the new man. The character of motives associated with it, as 2 Cor. v, 17–20, shows that it reaches to the lowest depths of the conscious being. The description of the life before and after the change reveals how profound has been the transformation, as may be seen by reference to Luke xv, 11–24, and Rom. viii, 1–10.

Since the New Testament notices this matter only incidentally, fitting it to the special case in hand, with no attempt to analyze or even exhaustively to define it, there is obvious limitation in its treatment of conversion. In the first generation of the church, before communities were fairly organized as Christian and men had grown up in the atmosphere of a Christian social life, there was only one way by which mature

persons could pass from the Gentile community to the church. This was, as Paul indicates (Rom. x, 14, 15), by the preaching of the gospel. Thus there was wrought in the reason a persuasion of sin and grace, and in the moral and spiritual life an abrupt break with an evil past. This mode of entering the Christian life, made necessary by the conditions of the earliest missionary age of the church, which must still in a measure hold good in modern missionary work, has come to be regarded as the well-nigh exclusive way to adult conversion in Christian communities.

This particular notion of conversion has been confirmed by the ordinary conception of Saul's conversion. The sudden, violent transformation of the man, apparently repeated in the experience of so many other individuals, has been represented as the typical form of conversion. This is not the place to discuss the nature of the change which Saul underwent on the Damascus road.¹ It must suffice here to express more than doubt whether the change in him was what we mean by conversion, — he "only passed from life to higher life,"² — and to add that the teaching that this change in Saul is the ideal, thus the only mode of conversion, would be nothing less than disastrous.

The beginning of the Christian life which characterizes adults has two distinct phases, — one, a sudden and violent change in the fundamental principle of character; the other, a gradual approach and final conscious yielding to the will of God.

The reality of a sudden and violent moral and

¹ Cf. Bacon, *The Story of St. Paul*, pp. 34-67.

² Caird, *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1903, p. 17, "St. Paul and the Idea of Evolution."

spiritual change, preceded by a longer or shorter period of sorrow for sin and of struggle with hitherto dominant evil dispositions, characterized by a decisive and final repudiation of the ruling principle of the past and the surrender of the will to God, is not to be doubted. The most likely subjects of such a conversion are those who have been guilty of outbreking sins, who easily pass from one extreme of emotion to another, who are aroused from simple moral indifference by a mighty proclamation of the gospel, or those who are compelled by reversals in outward conditions to readjust their lives to new and difficult necessities. In such an hour the gospel plows deep, until it lays bare the hidden motives of the soul (Heb. iv, 12). It arouses all the latent wickedness of the man into bitter hostility to the will of God. The long controversy of man with his Maker, of the sinner with his Saviour, gathers in intensity until it seems about to be declared on the side of evil; yet deeper forces than one is aware of are at work at the very springs of moral consciousness. And then, at length, when the storm of opposition rages at its fiercest, suddenly the conflict ceases, the will gives up its long strife, the beautiful peace of God, the sense of sins forgiven, steals into the heart; the love of God is shed abroad through the Holy Spirit; grace has triumphed; the new life has begun.

The other form in which, with infinite variety of experience, conversion occurs, is through the gradual change of sentiment and disposition which is a marked feature of many lives. Such persons, born to pious traditions, reared in Christian homes, nurtured under the influences of the church, moulding their conduct

in part unconsciously by Christian ideals, heartily supporting those social forces which have their rise in the gospel, have not been in the fullest sense Christians, but on the other hand, are not to be condemned in a wholesale manner. They are "not far from the kingdom of God." As of old, Jesus looking upon them loves them. They do indeed lack "one thing." In each the particular step which leads to "perfection" is different. Conversion will for them take place when the last opposition between their will and the will of God has been consciously done away, and God in Christ has become the law of their life.

The church in her teaching must make room for both of these ways of entrance into the new life. Until recently too much stress was perhaps laid upon the first of these two forms of spiritual crisis. The matter was conceived too "methodistically," and without due regard to the infinite manifoldness of life by which the Spirit of God reveals his presence and working among men. Neither method can be adopted, however, to the exclusion of the other. There will always be a place for those preachers of the gospel who have a special gift in awakening the moral nature to a sharp feeling of guilt and bringing it to a swift decision for God. Such conversions are not to be discarded because they are sudden, or because they give rise at the outset to crude and immature moral action, sometimes even followed by relapse to former conditions. Nor, on the other hand, are those instances of gradual approach to the kingdom of God to be disapproved, on the ground that such persons have hitherto lacked a perfect motive. This also is God's way. After all, the main question is not concerning the method but the

reality. The city of God lies four-square, with three gates on each side. Who will inquire by which door one entered, once he is within? The true Christian attitude here is a genial appreciation of the good under whatever guise it appears; at the same time, one is not to rest satisfied with any stage in the life of the spirit short of perfection. But the perfection thus aimed at is the perfection of personality. To this we now turn our attention.¹

III. What, then, is the new life in relation to personality? Not to raise those questions concerning personality which belong to the region of metaphysics, by the term here is meant a life organized according to the divine type. Personality, so far as it may be realized by us, is that by which we are allied with God; it is an ideal, and therefore to be achieved. And since Christ is for us the supreme Man, the most significant personality, our ideal must be manhood after his pattern — the “new man in Christ.” Thus and thus only do we in the fullest sense become persons. Personality is not something which belongs to us by inheritance, nor is it given by birth, nor is it completely realized at any moment of earthly life; it is rather the goal of all our human striving.

“We partly are, and wholly hope to be.” ■

This doctrine of personality is confirmed by psychology. Through experience we become aware of two distinct aspects of our being, — a natural aspect, consisting of animal instincts and desires, of inherited appetencies, — for the original quality and strength of

¹ James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 156-258.

■ *A Death in the Desert*.

which we are in no way accountable, — and a spiritual aspect, in which by self-conscious choices and aims we rise out of the condition of nature into that of freely formed character. There is, then, the raw material — impulses and tendencies — of individual existence, with the production of which we have had nothing to do, and also in the midst of these impulses and tendencies the emergence of a self-conscious principle which is more than these, which has to do with another goal that is nothing less than the infinite and eternal. This self-conscious principle is destined, first, to discover its distinction from what is mere nature, then to antagonize nature so far as this offers opposition to the idea of the spirit, and finally, to take up and transform the natural so that the non-moral qualities of the animal shall become the personal modes of human life. We may not be able, indeed, to draw the precise boundary line between nature and character, and yet if we consider the extremes in the manifestation of both, — on the one hand the disposition and temperament in which impulsive action originates, on the other hand the choice in which the self is identified with the ideal ends of our being, — we perceive not only how widely different they are, but also the principle by which each is distinguished. Only those acts are personal which are our own. Personality is, therefore, that which we become through rational choice. Personality and ideal character are the same reality.

From ethical considerations we reach the same conclusion. There is an actual and an ideal self. The actual self may be defined as the sum total of our consciousness at a given time; the ideal self is that deeper, not yet realized personality wherein alone are

to be our perfection and blessedness. The actual self is often the battle-ground on which the lower and the higher strive for the mastery. The Apostle knows of a discord set up within him, — a law in his members warring against the law of his mind. Thus his moral consciousness is a self which judges and a self which is judged. There is an element of the self which serves the law of God, another which serves the law of sin. The actual self is, therefore, seen to be the union of irreconcilable opposites. If I am the self which judges the “sin which dwelleth in me,” I am also the self that is condemned. Yet “inasmuch as consciousness in its unity embraces all that passes within it, it may be said that I am at once the combatants and the conflict, and the field that is torn with the strife.”¹ This is not, however, the ideal self. The true personality is indeed emerging from the conflict, and is to be realized by means of it. It consists in the gradual, definitive supremacy of the rational will, by which all opposing forces are either annihilated, or transformed into accessories and servants of the life of the spirit.

Personality may be considered also with reference to its constituent elements. Thus we may regard it as self-consciousness, or as conscious reason, conscious freedom, conscious love. Yet a moment’s attention to any one of these properties of our life is enough to convince us that they are never complete. Neither at birth nor at any particular stage of our development are we pure spirit; we become spirit only so far and to such degree as our self-conscious life is characterized by reason, by free will, and by love. The rational

¹ Caird, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 274; cf. Hegel, *Philosophy of Religion*, vol. i, p. 64, Eng. tr.

nature is indeed present in every individual, but it is a nature, a becoming, a transition from less to more, a gradual awakening to the ever richer relations which man in virtue of his development sustains to the world and to God. Then only is the reason perfected when it becomes an organ for the Spirit of God, when, no longer a purely individual intelligence, it allies itself with the universal intelligence, and thus sees light in the light of God. In like manner, free will is no birth-right; it is rather that which distinguishes the ideal man from the infant — the mature man so far as he realizes the ideal. He only is free who freely, constantly, and perfectly identifies himself with the highest ethical and spiritual good — the will of God. If, moreover, we think of love as that in which personal relationships are completely fulfilled, then love is the true self. Here we come upon that supreme law of the spirit, voiced in the words, "he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it;" and "except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." This, too, is a process, to be ever more completely realized, the outcome of which is the unfolding personality.

Whether, therefore, we take the point of view of psychology, of ethics, or of the constituent elements of personality, all bear the same testimony to the relation of the beginning of the new life to the ideal personality. Even if, as in the case of the adult, an organizing principle is already in possession of the character, yet the life now begins consciously to be developed according to the full Christian type which alone holds the secret of personality. All is indeed inchoate. It is a time of beginnings. Paul calls those

who are in this period of development "babes in Christ." In different individuals this experience will be significant according to temperament or the conditions in which it arises. As in the parable of the sower, in some the new life is marked by intense but shallow feeling — ardent hopes, brilliant promises, only quickly to wither away ; in others, beginning in confident expectation of continuance, it is slowly but effectually dwarfed, and finally by a world of competing interests brought to an end ; while in others, it sends its roots deep into every part of the being and grows into increasing beauty and fruitfulness (Mark iv, 1-20). But this means that the beginning of the new life has vital relations with Christ. We therefore inquire what these are.

IV. In our discussion of the work of Christ, we regarded it from two points of view, which indeed merge into one : his revelation of the gracious will of God to bring men into ethical and spiritual union with himself ; and such an identification of himself with men in their evil conditions caused by sin that he enters perfectly into the life of sinful men, in order that he may lift them into fellowship with God. The beginning of the new life is, therefore, response to both of these realities as the principle of character.

The response naturally appears in two forms : (1) as correlative of the self-disclosure of God in Christ, a growing apprehension of Christ as the one in whom God and man meet in reconciliation — the rational aspect of Christian experience ; (2) as correlative of the self-identification of God in Christ with men, an ever more complete union of the soul with Christ — the moral and religious aspect of Christian experience.

Neither of these two aspects of the new life exists in isolation from the other; each is only a partial phase of every concrete experience. With this understanding, however, we may for convenience consider the place which each holds in the development of the Christian life.

First, then, as to the intellectual relation of the new life to the revelation of God in the person and work of Christ. Negatively, for the Christian, the knowledge of redemptive revelation is the product neither of philosophy and metaphysics nor of historical investigation. Paul announces this truth when, on the one hand, he shows that speculative philosophy falls short of this profound reality, being precluded by its very nature from penetrating into the secret depths of the gracious wisdom of God, and when, on the other hand, he declares that, although he had once thought of Christ simply as an individual, like himself a member of the Jewish nation, yet he was able no longer to hold him exclusively within the circle of human history: Christ was for him the revelation of the divine order. By this, he does not discredit man's intelligence; he only points to a higher content and a new method. Nor does he empty history of all worth; he confesses that he has himself traced a portion of his message to its actual origin in Jesus Christ. He knows, however, that his faith in Christ has a deeper certainty — a certainty which neither philosophy nor history can create or destroy. Not from without, but from within, from the inmost depths of his personal consciousness, by a sudden, mighty, and gracious divine self-disclosure, he became aware of the reality of Christ as the Son of God (Gal. i, 16). Jesus, also, in his address to

Simon Peter, contrasts the two sources of knowledge concerning himself: on the one hand, by hearsay and through ordinary channels of information; and, on the other hand, as Edwards so happily phrased it, by "a divine, a supernatural light immediately imparted to the soul by the Spirit of God." Moreover, it is to Jesus a cause of special rejoicing that not to human learning but to simple-hearted trust are the realities of redemptive love disclosed.

This law naturally precludes reliance upon particular speculative theories of the person and work of Christ as essential prerequisites of salvation. The Christ who is accepted in the new life is not the Christ of dogma as such, but rather that one of whom the ignorant and the learned, the little child and the aged Christian, read in the New Testament, who still speaks with convincing authority, by whom grace and truth still come to men.

Positively, the intellectual relations of the beginning of the new life are concerned first with Christ. There is the apprehension that, as the Apostle expresses it (2 Cor. v, 14, 15), in the death of Christ — the perfect and eternal conquest of sin — we are somehow included. The wide, awful, devastating power of sin has at last found in Christ one who is mightier than itself. Sin may indeed put the Son of God to death, but his surrender to its utmost violence, when he seemed forever vanquished, is the means of his glorious triumph over it; and the cross, the emblem of ignominy and defeat, became the symbol of love's conquest over sin. Accordingly, each man who enters the new life comes to know not only that Jesus in his own person overcame the wickedness and power of sin, but

that all men, in virtue of their oneness with him, are mystically, that is, ideally and potentially, dead to sin and alive unto God.

Secondly, the new life is concerned with the peculiar type of character seen in Jesus Christ, proposed for human imitation, and fitly called Christian. This type of character is unique among all the types of human historical life. Its organizing principle and the circle of relations in which it develops are peculiar to itself. This is true whether we regard it from the ethical or the religious point of view. In comparison with Hinduism with its polytheism and its castes; in comparison with Buddhism with its religious agnosticism and its absolute self-renunciation — the final extinction of desire; in comparison with Confucianism with its worship of ancestors and its provincial notions of right; in comparison with Judaism with its externalized and factitious religious observances; in comparison with Mohammedanism with its inculcation of submission and its imperfect moral code, — Christianity lifts all personal relations into the light of universal and absolute love. This means not that there is nothing good in other religions, but only that in every one of these, by reason of alien elements mingled with the good, the good is necessarily incomplete; this Jesus does not destroy but fulfills.

We have now to consider the ethical aspect of the new life in relation to the person and work of Christ. This has already been summarized as response to the self-identification of God in Christ with men, namely, as an ever more complete ethical and spiritual identification of the soul with God as he is revealed in Christ. This is the meaning of that word of Athanasius, "He

became man, in order that we might become divine." The movement of God towards men is reciprocated by a movement of men towards God.

The act by which one identifies himself with God in Christ may be regarded in several aspects. First, as repentance. We have seen that sin is alienation from God. The spirit of life which creates moral separation from him must, therefore, be renounced. This renunciation will be marked by several accompaniments, which are not so much successive as contemporary. To begin with, there is a change of mind. Sin always originates in illusion; reality is not beheld as it is, — this indeed is never perfectly the case, — but it is seen in a false, even if attractive light, and in relations which are essentially, although not apparently, incongruous with it. In some way the illusion must be dispelled. The chief psychological obstacle to conversion has always lain in the difficulty of the sinner's conceiving of himself as having, or as wishing to have, different thoughts, interests, aims, habits, associations, in short, conceiving of himself as ever being a different kind of person from the one he now is. Yet until this change of mind takes place, there can be no repentance. Until he repeats in his own experience the consciousness of men of long ago, beholding himself and his action as foolish, empty, missing the mark, wrong, evil, wicked, rebellious; until there is uncovered to him the fascination, the unreality, the wickedness of his sin, he will never change his way, nor can the moral reason assume its true place as guide and check to the will.

In repentance sorrow is also implied, — sorrow in view of obligations disregarded, ideals trampled upon, possibilities of character and action ignored, but most

of all, sorrow in view of the new meaning which God has for the awakened soul. This sting of regret in natures of great emotional intensity may be keen and terrible. There may, indeed, be moral quickening, illumination of conscience, regret for a wicked and wasted past, bitter agony of remorse, in a word, profound conviction of sin, — all without repentance ; but it is valid only as it issues in a voluntary reaction against sin, in the repudiation of every sinful principle, and of the false self out of which it springs. Whatever separates the soul from God must be consciously and forever renounced.

This aspect of the beginning of the new life has been called negative. It is such only for the theologian ; in experience it is far otherwise. He who wrenches himself free from his fixed associations of evil thoughts, from his deep-seated passions, from his habitually wicked ways, alone knows the force and the tragedy of resistance and oft-repeated defeat.

A second aspect of the act of self-identification with God in Christ may be designated as faith. Only this term must be relieved of any purely formalistic meaning. It presupposes knowledge of the grace of God revealed in Christ, which has already been described. It includes also, as the theologians have affirmed, hearty intellectual assent to this self-disclosure of God as the natural and happy way of delivering men from the power of sin. The essential element in faith is, however, self-committal to God and, therefore, reception of him as revealed in Jesus Christ.

We have, then, at the outset to exhibit two features of the action of faith. It is a giving of one's self, as Paul so beautifully intimates in 2 Cor. viii, 5, so that

henceforth the man belongs not to himself but to his Lord. The love by which Jesus was led to give himself up for men is met by a like self-giving on the part of men who henceforth devote themselves to him. Instead of remaining separate individuals, through faith we become branches of the true vine, members of the body of which Christ is the head. We surrender our isolated and limited self for the sake of the larger self which originates in this new relation to Christ.

This giving up of self involves (1) identification with those aims for which Jesus himself stood. This is what Paul means when he says that since we were buried with Christ in baptism, we are to walk in newness of life; and again, if we were raised together with Christ, we ought to seek the things that are above.

(2) Since Christ never conceived of himself apart from others, faith implies identification with the higher interests and well-being of one's fellow-men. He who gives himself to Christ, in that same self-devotion gives himself to all men, with whom Christ is indissolubly connected. Thus one cannot as a Christian devote himself to Christ apart from others, nor can he yield himself to others irrespective of Christ. Herein is the solution of the problem which haunts and mystifies so many inquirers, namely, as to the relation of faith to love. Love is that expression of life in which he who unites himself to Christ is by reason of that relation identified with men.

(3) Inasmuch as faith is a powerful outgoing of the will towards God in Christ, it contains a principle of unity for the entire personal life. In order that there may be something worthy to offer Christ, the first concern is that all the springs of action be kept pure and

sweet, that the tree be good. The rational powers are brought "into captivity to the obedience of Christ." As the affections contribute to him their most precious treasures of love and devotion, they are in turn glorified by his acceptance of them. And the mighty current of energy which sets towards Christ draws into its sweep all the eddying and even stagnant forces which in other men divide or corrupt the outflowings of the inner life.

This account of faith as a giving of self to God in Christ would, however, be one-sided unless supplemented by an opposite quality — a receiving of God in Christ. If man gives, naturally God receives; but also if God gives, man receives; and man receives immeasurably more than he gives. He does indeed give all that he has, but his gift is human, and therefore at the best imperfect; on the other hand, he is put in the way of receiving out of the infinite fullness of God ever fresh accesses of grace (Jno. i, 16). "In him ye are made full" (Col. ii, 10). Here we come upon that strange paradox in man's life, that in the very act of self-devotion to another, one becomes himself recipient of infinite good. It is a logical contradiction that one receives what he gives; but experience, as in so many other instances, resolves the apparent contradiction, revealing instead a simple unity. We are to think of neither the giving nor the receiving as existing one apart from the other; nor of one as preceding or conditioning the other regarded as a separate act, but of each as an integral, even if an opposite, aspect of faith. We have thus the most perfect expression of the mutuality of the personal relations of fellowship and indeed of life. The new life is, from the human

aspect, the surrender of the soul to God ; from the divine aspect, it is the life of God in the soul. It may, therefore, be regarded either as "the elevation of the finite to the infinite, or as the realization of the infinite in the finite." ¹

The peculiarities of faith as a receptivity require consideration. In the first place, faith receives not some reality external to God, such as notional propositions or any particular truth or an objective atonement or a forensic pardon, but God himself ; and not God as something external and transcendent, but as immanent, in whom "we live, and move, and have our being." It is a becoming aware of him ; letting him have his way with us ; allowing him to energize as truth in our thoughts, peace and joy in our feelings, law and ideal in our will ; in a word, it is a becoming conscious of him as our "all in all." We have slight occasion for anxiety lest we exaggerate this divine element of the new life, lest, on the one hand, our part in the process of redemption is minimized, or, on the other hand, we sink into pantheistic quietism. "All things are of God" (1 Cor. xi, 12). Christian experience emerges out of an infinite background of divine energy and grace. That which is the deepest principle of human personality, of steadfastness in obedience, of comfort in sorrow, is no other than the true explanation of the origin of the new life in God. The religious consciousness of Paul and John, of Augustine and Luther and Calvin, of Edwards and Schleiermacher, received no mistaken interpretation, when these men found in it the immediate and powerful energizing, not so much of their own will as of the

¹ Caird, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 294.

will of God. Analyze and give credit to the human element as we may, yet, after all, the Christian life is "the life of God" (Eph. iv, 18). It is the highest reason no less than the noblest worship to confess that "of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things" (Rom xi, 36).

The second peculiarity of faith as a receptivity is that we are "in Christ," and Christ is "in us." It would be impossible to decide to which of these aspects of the new life Paul gives the greater emphasis. In any case, the unity of Christ and the believer is set forth in the New Testament as a fundamental fact of Christian experience; and it is presented in many symbols. Christ is formed in the Christian as the embryo in the womb (Gal. iv, 19), so that he dwells in the heart (Eph. iii, 17); the Christian has the mind of Christ (1 Cor. ii, 16), the spirit of Christ (Rom. viii, 9), even the vital organs of Christ (Phil. 1, 8). Thus the body and its members are Christ's (1 Cor. vi, 13, 15). Since, therefore, the organization of our new life springs from him, we are members of his body (Eph. v, 30). As husband and wife are one flesh, so Christ and we are one spirit (1 Cor. vi, 17).

John presents this unity of Christ and the believer in two striking symbols: "I am the vine, ye are the branches; . . . abide in me, and I in you;" "he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him." By no other figures could the vital union, the identity of Christ and the believer, be so finely put. And yet in the simplest way Jesus liked to dwell upon this reality in such words as these: "Ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you;" "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in

thee ; that they also may be one in us ;” “ I in them, and thou in me.” This ideal of the Christian life thus explained finds its response and fulfillment in the confession of Paul : “ I have been crucified with Christ ; and yet it is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me ; and the life I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.”

Two implications of the greatest importance for the new life are bound up with this mystical union. One is that of the “ living Christ ” as the source of the Christian consciousness. His violent death, instead of bringing his redemptive activity to an end, was the stage through which the narrow restrictions of his earthly influence were broken down, and he thenceforth entered upon a perpetually wider identification of his life with that of men. The Apostolic church found in this reality the secret of its patience and hope, its victorious conflict with sin, and its final redemption from all evil. The living Christ carries forward in the hearts of men what his death had only begun (Rom. v, 10 ; viii, 34 ; Col. i, 27 ; 1 Jno. ii, 12).

We cannot allow validity to the contention of Ritschl, that this relation of Christ to believers is not individual but only collective.¹ That Christ sustains a vital relation to his church is indeed true ; both in his own teaching and in that of the Apostles this is unequivocally affirmed (Matt. xviii, 20 ; 1 Cor. xii, 12–27 ; Eph. iv, 12–16 ; Rev. i, 12–20). The living Christ realizes his aim in and through an ever more complete organic unity with the whole body of his followers regarded as bound together in a mystic fellow-

¹ *Justification and Reconciliation*, pp. 607, 608, Eng. tr.

ship of love (Eph. i, 23). Thus the whole body of Christians is conceived of not, as is too often the case, as composed of individual units or as isolated groups of men (Gal. vi, 15 ; Eph. ii, 15, 18), but as a new ethical person, in whom Christ dwells as the formative principle and power of the collective "new man."

But this position does not bar out the idea of a personal relation between Christ and the individual Christian. Christian experience definitely witnesses to this reality, and is inexplicable apart from it. Christian experience is, however, not simply a subjective affair ; it contains a firm objective element. "It was the good pleasure of God . . . to reveal his Son in me ;" "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. i, 15, 16 ; ii, 20). The two ways of ascertaining more precisely the nature of this objective element are by interpretation, first, of experience, and, secondly, of the present activity of the ever-living One, by a comparison of it with the activity of the earthly Jesus. On the one hand, individual Christian experience is what it is by virtue of an inward presence and energy of the risen Christ. Schleiermacher was in the right when, concentrating his attention upon the Christian consciousness, he discovered in it the product of the perpetual redeeming activity of Christ. And Herrmann has full justification in his assertion that "the inner life of religion in the last resort is something secret and incommunicable."¹ We have, therefore, a right to ask, What revelation of God in Christ is contained for us in our personal Christian experience? On the other hand, this disclosure of Christ must be brought into the light of the historical Jesus, "full of grace and truth," and thus if need be

¹ *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 17.

enlarged, deepened, purified. Only so are we guarded against a purely subjective interpretation of Christian experience — a subjectivism which conducts straight to fanaticism, or at least to all sorts of fanciful notions which only beget unreal emotional states.

The point of our contention is, that if the living Christ is the source of the Christian consciousness in the late stages of the new life, he is by the same token, as Paul has so finely described the beginnings of his own experience, equally active in its earliest beginnings. Real identification of Christ with the soul and of the soul with Christ is therefore the essential origin of Christian experience.

A second implication of this union is that the believer is a "new man." The old life, so far as it was antagonistic to God, is no more; the new life begins completely to be organized after a higher order. The man is no longer the man he was. Ideally he is all that he can ever become. In principle he is already spiritually transformed. Hereafter he has only to become what he is at heart. This does not mean that the union between Christ and him is perfect, but it does mean that the union is real. Nor, on the other hand, does it affirm that the Christian ideal will not gradually unfold to him an immeasurably deeper and more significant content. But whatever changes may come, there can henceforth be no change in the essential ground and the all-embracing aim of his personality.

V. The relation of the new life to the forgiveness of sins has been, since the Reformation, a burning question in theology. In our discussion, the term forgiveness rather than justification is used, in part because the associations inevitably connected with justification

introduce matter irrelevant to the subject and thus tend to confuse the issue, in part because some of the elements usually considered under justification have already appeared in our treatment, and in part because the word "forgiveness" brings us closer to the teaching and method of Jesus.

At this point, then, we raise three preliminary questions. (1) What is the state of the sinner in relation to God? or, What is the nature of guilt? If we conceive of guilt from the ethical point of view, it signifies the sinner's habitual character in relation to God. It pertains to the essence of choice. One is guilty not because he has transgressed a law, but because his attitude toward a person is wrong. It is nothing less than a personal relation. Sin is not atomistic, and does not cease with single acts, but issues in a condition which is cumulative, wherein each sin deposits something of its essence as a permanent part of the spirit of alienation from God. This state of sin is guilt. There is guilt as long as there is sin; with the cessation of sin as a principle of life, guilt also ceases.

(2) What did Christ come to effect, and what was his method? His mission was to draw men into living union with himself, and so with the Father; thus sin should in principle be completely done away and the path to moral and spiritual perfection entered. This was his aim, to win men to "the life of God." The method by which he sought to realize this was by his self-identification with men, especially with the anguish of their sorrow and the misery of their sin, and even with that condition of suffering which men had interpreted as expressive of God's anger against sin; in all of which he brought God near to men

in reconciliation. So the "living Christ," instead of withdrawing into a world of isolated, self-sufficing felicity, unites himself ever more closely with men in their want and woe; he is the "quickening spirit," who seeks to establish a vital relation between himself and the sinner in order thus to reconcile him to God, to beget in him the righteousness of God.

(3) What, then, is the actual state of the man who is "in Christ"? Paul replies, "a new creation" (2 Cor. v, 17). Naturally, this does not mean that the person is the subject of a miraculous activity of God; and the "new" must not be so interpreted as to yield the notion of an instantaneous and complete transformation. The sphere of the miraculous is the region of physical reality. A moral miracle is a misnomer. To speak of the character of Jesus even as a moral miracle is to introduce into his personality an incongruous and inexplicable element. Nor have we any more adequate reason for conceiving of the divine relation to the new life as partly miraculous. Here there is indeed a new phenomenon, concerning which several features may be noted. In the first place, it cannot be accounted for by the nature of the previous life. This, as we have seen, is true whether we speak of the adolescent or the adult beginning of Christian experience. One does not look to the "flesh" for the origin of the "spirit." The spiritual emerges neither from the natural life nor from the environment (Jno. i, 12, 13; iii. 6; 1 Cor. xv, 46).

Again, the fact may be described as both a denial and an affirmation — a moral paradox. The Apostle Paul has expressed this in the phrase touched with surprise, "the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." The law is verified in every fresh

entrance upon the Christian life. Things are what they are to us in virtue not of values intrinsic in themselves, but of the desire and aims which we associate with them. When, therefore, owing to inner change, one class of interests is surrendered for another, in a real sense the things which have been connected with those interests are both surrendered and yet retained. A false gives place to a true association. The old things, so far as they derived their meaning from our past relation to them, are no more; nevertheless, in our changed relation to them they become ours in a new and inalienable ownership (Mark x, 28-30). Here we come upon that principle which has often engaged our attention: the secret of self-realization and possession of the world is by negation both of the self and of the world, in which act, however, the true self and the moral order of the world are affirmed and become for the first time truly ours (Mark viii, 34-37). Thus to the new man in Christ the world and all that it contains is likewise new, transfigured in the redemptive light which shines upon it from his changed consciousness.

We have said that this phenomenon is new, but it is not so in any sense which denies the organic unity of personal life. It is psychologically impossible for the contents of the stream of the normal consciousness to be instantly and completely transmuted. Were such a change possible, the result would be pitiable indeed, for not only would memory be incapable of yielding up to recognition its treasures of experience, and the laws of association which condition all thought and knowledge be paralyzed, but even character itself would be impossible. On the contrary, if anything is established

with reference to personal life, this at least is certain, that the law of its development is twofold — continuity and solidarity. According to one aspect of this law, there is no such abrupt break in human development, that any moment becomes unrelated to the whole of one's past; personal life is an unbroken *continuum*. According to the other aspect, every conscious action leaves behind it something which becomes a constituent element of that automatic organization which we call the self. On such a view, conversion seems impossible, but it is only on such a view that any rational notion of conversion is given. Conversion implies not only a turning, but also one who turns. The adoption of a new principle by the character involves a character in which the new principle appears. The transformation which this principle is destined to work out through the personal life is inconceivably great, but this can be effected only by a progressive penetration of the entire being by the principle in question, according to the law referred to above. What is true of this new man who has begun the life in Christ is that at the very centre of his conscious self he has accepted a principle, an ideal, a spirit of life, which contains the promise and potency of perfection. As a principle it is at the outset active; it begins at once to reveal the infinite energy of which it partakes. But however mighty its power at the first moment of Christian experience, its main significance lies in the measureless possibility which constitutes the life of its life. In its faith which is the finite if feeble manifestation of the infinite Reality, in its hope which is the harbinger note of an omnipotent and eternal Good-Will, in its love which is the human throbbing of the divine Love, one beholds a spirit of

life in Christ Jesus which not only emancipates from the law of sin and death, but, better still, has already begun to transform the personality into the likeness of its Saviour and Lord.

This, then, is the state of him who, once alienated from God, is now entering the new life. He with whom God in Christ had identified himself in a deed of boundless love, has on his part identified himself with God in Christ. At the lowest root, in the inmost centre, in the deep and hidden springs of personality, he has utterly broken with the very principle of sin. Time must indeed elapse ere the spirit of this profound beginning can retemper the desires and affections, and penetrating all the secondary elements of character, transform these by the law of the higher life; but the promise is here, as truly as the perfected organism is immanent in the beginning of any most feeble form of life.

We are now in a position to define the forgiveness of sins. It is that aspect of the divine redemptive action in which God draws the sinner away from his sin into conscious union with himself. God has overcome and forever put away the barrier in the sinner's heart which hindered reconciliation with the Saviour. He "lifts up and removes" the burden of sin (Ps. xxxii, 1). He "sends it away" from the consciousness of the sinner, so that it is no longer as before a domineering power (Matt. vi, 12; Luke vii, 48; cf. Rom. vi, 14). He has "covered" it from sight; one may look for it, but he will look in vain; he shall behold it no more (Ps. xxxii, 1). God has "cleansed" the spirit from its defilement, and it is now pure and sweet (Ps. li, 2). He has "blotted out" sin as a thick cloud is blotted out which hides man from the sun (Is. xlv, 22). In

the deep, eternal life of God, which holds fast all good in imperishable possession, the rebellion of the sinner, however bitter it may have been, once it is healed by the great Reconciler, is "remembered" no more (Is. xliii, 25 ; Jer. xxxi, 34). In forgiveness, therefore, God brings to an end the principle of sin as a law of life, and introduces through faith a germinant principle in which is contained a promise of advancing personal perfection.

If we have rightly conceived the forgiveness of sins, then several questions remain. First, what takes place with reference to the sins of the past? So far as there are consequences of sin which have entered into the natural or the historical world, these lie outside of the control of him who originated them ; they belong to the sphere of the general providential action of God. As for the consequences of sin within the renewed man's nature, these in the secondary elements of the personality continue in diminishing degree until they are either transformed or totally abolished. The sin of the past can, however, be neither undone nor recalled. It will be forever true that the man was once a sinner and that he did such things. But for the renewed man, whatever deed may have darkened his memory, or however wicked his character may have been once, from henceforth, within the field of his consciousness and in the sphere of action wherein the new man originates, the sin and the wicked will of the past are real no more. At the very outset of the new life, the Christian echoes this creative judgment on himself : "Dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ." And as we have already seen, if the sin of the past is at an end, the guilt has also disappeared with it. The only deliverance from

the sense of guilt lies in the transformation of the consciousness in which guilt had its seat and home. But this being changed, the feeling of guilt also disappears.

Does God, then, at the beginning of the new life treat one who is not righteous as if he were righteous? Is there any unreality in God's dealing with him who yields himself to the divine grace? Here only one position is tenable. We must hold firmly to the truth, that God treats men on the basis of reality. On any other principle we may indeed attribute to God any kind of action except that which is true of him; but he who is the All-Real can pronounce no judgments upon men other than those which are real. As Edwards has remarked, "What is *real* in the union between Christ and his people is the foundation of what is *legal*."¹ Accepting the first part of this position as valid, it is to be affirmed that if God treats one as if he were righteous or pronounces him righteous, then this is proof that in the sight of the Searcher of hearts the one so treated is righteous. But this is really part of another question, which is as follows: —

Is there imputation, and if so, what is the nature of it? If God treats men on the basis of reality, and if there is but one kind of righteousness recognized in the gospel, namely, personal righteousness, then there may be imputation indeed, but not in the sense of crediting to one person something which belongs to or has been done by another; on the contrary, "faith is reckoned for righteousness" (Rom. iv, 5; cf. verses 3–13). This expression is equivalent to the phrase, "the righteousness of the faith" (Rom. iv, 13). We are thus brought to a fourth question.

¹ *Works*, vol. v, p. 364.

What is the relation between faith and righteousness? If God reckons faith for righteousness, then faith is a real righteousness. These may be conceived of as the inner and outer aspect of the same spiritual reality. There is only one condition which can be designated as righteousness, and that is the ideal relation of man to God, wherein, through self-identification with the Infinite Life, the natural, fragmentary, sinful self is surrendered, and the person becomes an organ for the reception and expression of the life of God. But this is the description of faith. If, now, we conceive of faith not as a religious but as an ethical quality, we reach a similar conclusion. For faith is itself ethically excellent. It is only a beginning indeed, but the beginning of the conscious and complete realization of the ideal — a good-will independent of extraneous conditions for its moral quality; a moral quality of intense vigor; a prophetic power revealing and yet hiding an inexhaustible capacity of self-renewal. It is the principle of righteousness. This description of faith in relation to righteousness raises, however, another question.

What is the relation of faith to the forgiveness of sins? From the positions already made good, it is evident what our conception must be: it is a ground or cause of forgiveness. Naturally, the ultimate cause of forgiveness is nowhere else than in the gracious purpose of God. To this both the initiative and every stage in the process of redemption are to be traced, and that too in no grudging or calculating spirit. "To the praise of the glory of his grace" (Eph. i, 6) will be the confession of every redeemed soul "to the last syllable of recorded time." But the immediate cause of the forgiveness of sins lies not in something done outside of

man, but in the spirit and temper of the man himself. If sin had relation only to justice, or to government, or to some form of law, — criminal, civil, or ceremonial, — then forgiveness might be conceived of as based on an atonement regarded as satisfaction rendered to injured honor, violated authority, broken law, or as vindication of the righteousness of the Divine Ruler. But such a view presents the work of Christ negatively, as removal of an obstacle, rather than positively, as the introduction of the soul to ideal ethical and spiritual union with God. We therefore restate our fundamental proposition: God has in Christ identified himself with us, in order that we through Christ may become identified with him. Accordingly, faith, or what is only another way of expressing it, moral oneness with God, since it contains the spiritual essence of the new life, is the immediate cause of the forgiveness of sins. One further question remains.

What is the relation of forgiveness of sins to sanctification? The long controversy between the two parties — one of which holds that forgiveness and sanctification are of entirely different nature, justification being the declaring of the sinner righteous on the ground of Christ's atonement, and sanctification the process of becoming righteous, while the other party affirms that these are essentially of the same nature, being only two aspects of an identical reality — is likely never to be ended so long as one of the parties in question rests its case mainly on exegetical, the other for the most part on philosophical grounds. The Pauline doctrine of justification as set forth in the third chapter of Romans is an imperfect account of the beginning of the new life, requiring to be supplemented by his own teaching in

the following chapters, and especially in later Epistles ; whereas, the philosophical presentation of these two moments of the Christian life needs to be emancipated from unessential elements which have become associated with it. The whole matter must be lifted to a point of view where the antagonisms, inevitable in the lower stages of its development, are relieved of the incidental features out of which the conflict arose, and thus blend in a higher unity in which the truth of both is sympathetically accepted and substantially combined. This will take place when Paul is allowed to supplement his own teaching, when Christian experience is interpreted in its own light, and when the precious reality embedded in both theories comes to adequate expression. Justification in the Pauline sense may be explained as meaning simply remission of sins, or as others contend, making righteous, or "the renewal of the inner man."¹ Laying aside the distinctive refinements which both parties have developed, there is hope of reconciling them by a change of terms, and by a fresh description of the divine-human reality in the beginning of the new life. Adopting this course, therefore, we find both parties agreeing in the following positions : (1) the initiative of the new life is in the divine grace alone ; (2) the divine grace does not simply remit sin, but creates a new man, between whom and God is from henceforth established a vital redemptive relation ; (3) the human experience of this renewing grace is a principle of perfect mutuality between the divine and the human, whereof faith is a constituent, energetic element ; (4) the perfecting of the renewed personal being is the progressive realization of

¹ *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Sess. VI, chap. vii.

all the principles, both actual and ideal, which were in existence at the beginning of the new life. In the light of these commonly accepted positions, which the Scriptures and Christian experience and indeed all the great systems of doctrine present as essential, we are pointed the way to a solution of the ancient controversy. It is only when theologians confine themselves to "questions about words and names," instead of the universally experienced realities of life from God, that definitions raise hopeless barriers to divide the disciples of a common Saviour and Lord.

VI. The new life, since it is ideal, is not only individual, but also social. The beginning of it is, therefore, introduction into that organic relation with others wherein alone the true development of personality is realized.

In the New Testament, the church is presented as a social unity. As Jesus knew no life apart from the Father, so he knew none apart from his disciples. And he saw to it that they should have a common life, and find the basis of that common life in him. Later, they were bound together by a common salvation, a common faith, a common baptism, a common ministry, in a word, a common consciousness, whose centre was Jesus Christ. There was a common tradition and a common hope. The mutual grief of the disciples at the death of Jesus, their mutual elevation of spirit at his manifestation from the heavenly world, their mutual even if temporary sharing of goods, reveal the beginnings of this community life which is spreading through the world; but always with Christ as the principle of a living union. Accordingly, the centre of this life is not in themselves, whether as individuals or in relation

to one another, but in Christ as the ideal realization of their union. In every one of his letters Paul gave this reality frequent and beautiful expression. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews finds in it the key to the unity and courage, the endurance and final victory, of the church.

This reality of the Christian life thus reached through experience, without any attempt to rationalize it, has become a first principle of modern social philosophy. According to Plato, the ideal social state is a republic, in which the worth of each one is realized only in organic relations to the whole. Aristotle, as indeed Plato also, knows of a contemplative life, of a higher order than that of political activity, but even this neither exists nor is perfected apart from the civic whole. The mediæval monastic orders, whose deepest motive lay in a protest against the worldliness of the church, instead of renouncing all social ties, substituted a smaller group of kindred persons for the larger miscellaneous body; in unlimited fellowship within the order and in constant ministry to the needy without, they profoundly emphasized the law of organic unity. Man is not, as Rousseau claims, "born free" in any sense that isolates him from the institutions and customs of society. On the contrary, both the redeemed individual and the redeemed society require to be conceived as follows: Society is not a conglomerate, composed of separate, self-identical units, held together by a social compact or by some other form of volitional activity of all combined, each one possessing in himself a complete, isolated individuality; it is rather an organic unity, in which each person forms an integral part of the common life and is essential to the completed functions of

the whole — “many members, one body.” Even the “more feeble” and the “less honorable” are equally necessary with the rest of the members to the well-being of all.

Accordingly, the person realizes his ideal destiny, not in changeless isolation and separateness, but only in an ever more complete identification with society. To render this explicit, let us affirm: (1) So long as one is simply an individual, existing in isolation from all others, he is not and cannot become man; he is at best only a branch which is “withered” because severed from vital connection with the tree. The only medium in which personality can develop is the living, mutual relations in which society is also perfected. (2) Consciousness is inconceivable as a purely individual reality. Society is a unity, whose objective aspect embraces the infinite complexity of forces and laws, of pursuits and aims, whose subjective aspect is, however, the equally rich content of personal life — impulse, intelligence, desire, and choice. (3) The very meaning of spirit leads to this conclusion. Spirit is not an abstract and completed something which exists in and for itself alone, but a unity of conscious states, which is continually finding and hence unfolding its true life in and through mutual relations with other personal unities like itself. (4) It is only through self-sacrifice that self-realization is attained; and this means that the narrow circle of interests centring in the private self is not to be held fast, but is to be merged and find its fulfillment in the wider ends common to all. But this is possible only in organic union with others; losing our life, we save it. Thus we discover the import of the paradoxical law, “Die to live.”

And since the community has no completeness apart from Christ, the principle of its death and of its life is found alone in him.

The beginning of the new life involves, therefore, the law of perfect mutuality as between the individual and society. One consciously identifies his interests and aims, his hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, even life itself, with the lives of others. The infallible mark of spiritual transition from the principle of the old to that of the new life is identification with the higher ethical and religious good of all (1 Jno. iii, 14; Gal. i, 23). "A man grows by his care of others."¹ Naturally, this principle is not to be so interpreted as to preclude entrance upon the Christian life by those exceptional persons between whom and others free exchanges of good are largely withheld. However, it does show the incongruity of coming to Christ for a salvation simply of the self — a relic of that excessive individualism which, if once a necessary stage, must not be the permanent character of the new life. The desire sometimes expressed, that one may at last land his soul in heaven, like a spent swimmer after long battling with adverse seas, finally flung up barely alive on the beach, springs from a profound misconception of the nature of salvation. Such a wish may indeed be naïvely and sincerely cherished, but it is after all only a more refined selfishness; for salvation is to common good, to a city of God, to a kingdom of heaven.

The message of the gospel cannot emphasize too strongly this bearing of the new life (Mark i, 14, 15); nor can the Christian from the outset make too much

¹ Shaler, *The Neighbor*, p. 187.

of this relation. For the Apostle Paul there appeared in the death of Christ a principle of reconciliation whereby all beings, in the heaven, upon the earth, and under the earth, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, men, and even the suffering creation itself, are to be restored to their ideal harmony, first of all with God, henceforth to be animated by a common spirit. In this prophetic outlook as it concerns humanity, every race of men, Jew and Gentile alike, and each individual, formerly alienated and thus disconnected from all the rest, in virtue of this union with God in Christ, enters into and abides in organic oneness with the whole body of the redeemed.

Three further considerations remain, which are indeed obvious, but yet deserve mention. (1) The community with which at his entrance into the Christian life the person identifies himself is the community not as actually existing at any given moment on the earth, but as in part ideal and in process of realization. Nothing can be finer than the Apostle's constructive faith, wherein, overlooking the existing imperfections of the church, he conceives of it as already "complete" in Christ, and of himself as one with it in the assurance of its ultimate redemption. (2) The Christian body has its unity from the identification not primarily of its members with one another, but of every member with Christ (Gal. iii, 28; Rom. xii, 5). (3) In this organic relation the individual, instead of losing his identity or vaporizing his personal interests into diffused but indefinable public good, finds the sphere of his true self-realization. He does not and cannot know the wealth of his own nature until he beholds it reflected back to him in other natures like his own;

nor can he do his noblest work except in conjunction with others. However peculiar one's native gifts, or obscure his station, or hemmed in his activity, yet in the redeemed society, both in itself and in its relation to the world that it seeks to save, ample scope is provided for the perfecting of every personal life.

VII. In our discussion of the relation of the new life to the Holy Spirit, it will be necessary for us first to define our notion of the Spirit. We shall then be able to ascertain the nature of the work of the Spirit, both in the inception and in the progress of the Christian life.

In the teaching of the Old Testament, several features concerning the Spirit of God are prominent.¹ The Spirit of God is the power which goes forth from God in creative and providential action and in the historical life of man. The quickening force in every living thing is that of the Spirit of God, given or withheld according to the will of God. Manifold forms of personal life — the higher impulses, genius, wisdom, heroic valor, prophetic gifts, and singular holiness — are due to the working of the Spirit of God. The chief work of the Spirit of God in the spirit of man is that of empowering for special service in the theocratic community; only scant allusion is made to distinctively redemptive functions.

In the doctrine of the Spirit in the New Testament, our attention is directed to several aspects of the Apostolic consciousness. There is, first, the absence of any thoroughly elaborated and unified teaching, and indeed of reasoned belief concerning the Spirit. To the Apostolic church, intensely preoccupied with practical

¹ Cf. Denio, *The Supreme Leader*, pp. 13-25.

concerns and under the immediate pressure of other realities of the gospel, theoretical questions about the relation of the Spirit to the Father and to the Son, or even about the Spirit as a distinct personal agent in the work of redemption, had not yet emerged. Besides, these men lived in that creative era when "the demonstration of the Spirit and of power" was everywhere manifest. As long as God was in every experience a living presence, an all-pervading spirit, as long as Christ, although thought of as in a supersensible world, filled their consciousness with the might of his resurrection life, — absent, indeed, yet present with them as a quickening spirit, — so long there was no need of any speculative attempts to interpret their experience in any more explicit way. The age of reflection, of theological construction, had not yet come.

Once more, the interchange of titles and offices between the Father, Christ, and the Spirit refers to an essential identity in each and all; as for example, Jno. xiv, 16; xvi, 7, 13; Rom. viii, 9–11; 1 Cor. ii, 10–14; 2 Cor. iii, 17, 18; 1 Jno. ii, 1. Attention is here drawn to two facts; one, the Spirit of God is not distinguished from the Spirit of Christ; the other, the Lord, the exalted Christ, is called the Spirit absolutely.

Finally, the New Testament appears to waver between the personal and the impersonal conception of the Spirit. There is, on the one hand, a presentation which rests on the notion that the Spirit is an activity within the divine nature itself, as in Paul's unmistakable allusion to the Spirit as the principle of the divine self-consciousness (1 Cor. ii, 10, 11), and then that the Spirit is an external power in the creation

(Luke i, 35), and especially with reference to men (Acts ii, 17, 18, 33 ; x, 44, 45 ; xix, 1-6). These declarations, however, do not present the Spirit as a distinct personal subsistence. There are many other allusions in the New Testament which point in the same direction. Naturally, the first to suggest themselves are all those in which the Spirit is spoken of as the Spirit of God and of Christ ; then all those coupled with the Spirit, such as the Spirit of truth, Spirit of holiness, Spirit of life, Spirit of adoption, Spirit of wisdom, Spirit of glory ; following these are the descriptive words which speak of the Spirit as given, sent, poured out, quenched, supplied ; there is, moreover, an earnest of the Spirit, and fruit of the Spirit. Nor is that profound remark of the Apostle to be overlooked which identifies the principle of the divine self-manifestation with the principle of the divine self-knowledge, according to the analogy of the human spirit in relation to the principle of self-consciousness (1 Cor. ii, 10, 11). Many of these expressions are indeed figurative and not to be literally interpreted ; yet the fact that such figures are freely employed is significant in any construction of a doctrine of the Spirit of God.

On the other hand, in the teachings of Paul, there are references which seem to point to the Spirit as a distinct personal energy, in which personal functions are attributed to the Spirit. Whatever was the Apostle's idea concerning the Spirit as distinguished from the Father and Christ, — he seems never to have speculated upon the subject, — he presents the Spirit as thoroughly personal ; the nature is personal, the functions are also personal. This mode of expression may

have its explanation in the fact that for him the Spirit was the Spirit of God or the Spirit of Christ, and, therefore, personal. Yet there are other instances where he seems to go further and set forth the Spirit as in some sense to be classed as a third reality together with God and Christ (1 Cor. xii, 4-6; 2 Cor. xiii, 14; Eph. iv, 4-6). With reference to such representations, however, the caution is to be observed that since they occur in letters dominated by a practical interest, subject to a considerable latitude of meaning, they must not be made to yield metaphysical results which were first developed at a much later time.

Looking now at these two apparently opposite forms of representation, it is more than doubtful whether on any theory of language they can be exactly harmonized. The Apostles themselves were unconscious of any problems raised by their free, undogmatic expressions, the origin of which is to be sought in their experience rather than in their reasoning. Moreover, the fact that in the first half of the second century the Spirit and the Logos were tentatively identified by the Apologists, shows that the speculative question concerning the personality of the Spirit as a distinct element in the Godhead was beginning to be agitated, but was still far from solution.

There are, however, three lines along which advance in the notion of the Spirit down to the end of the New Testament times may be observed. (1) While the term, Spirit of God, had its origin in the religious consciousness of Israel, as denoting God in his creative, providential, and historical activity, yet the import of it seems to have undergone a special development from the period of the Exile. It appears to have been part

of that movement which was at least accelerated by the Persian, and later by the Greek influence, which tended to set off God from the world, and thus to introduce powers of different degrees of excellence, which proceed from him as mediating forces between him and the world ; a movement which in the time of the Apostles had in Judaism elevated God to an inaccessible distance above the world, and substituted for the immediate free personal contact of God with the soul, which had been the earlier belief of Israel, a multitude of intermediary beings and activities by means of which God governed the world. In view of this condition, no one would claim that the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit existed in the pre-Christian religious thought. Nevertheless, traces of a doctrine of the Spirit leading up to the New Testament teaching are already apparent in the latter portion of Isaiah, where hypostatizing and possibly a vague notion of the personality of the Spirit had already begun (Is. xlv, 3 ; xlviii, 16 ; lxi, 1 ; lxiii, 10, 11), in Genesis (i, 2), and in the great Penitential Psalm (li, 11). This doctrine of the Spirit in Israel was in part paralleled in the later Greek speculation of the Logos ; and the two notions have much in common. In the Apostolic age the differentiation of the Spirit from the Father and the Son is already under way.

(2) A second indication of advance in the New Testament idea of the Spirit is that the notion of transcendence tends more and more to pass into that of immanence of the Spirit. By transcendence is here meant that conception of the action of the Spirit which regards this as from without, intermittent, and often miraculous. In its doctrine of the Spirit of God, the

Old Testament does not go beyond this presentation. As we should expect from the Jewish background out of which the New Testament arose, the transcendence of the Spirit, carried over from their Jewish heredity, is the earlier view of the Apostles. But such a doctrine failed to satisfy the facts of Christian experience, and particularly the intense religious experience of Paul. This required that the Spirit of God be not merely a fitful guest which comes and goes, but a continuous indwelling power. The significance for theology of the transition from the transcendence to the immanence of the Spirit lies partly in this, that there is a tendency to conceive of the Spirit as that aspect or personal power of God in which God and Christ energize in the world and in human life. God is not an "absentee God." There is indeed a transcendent aspect of his being — the infinite fullness of his essence is not and cannot be exhausted by any finite expression ; but wherever the self-manifestation of God is, there is the Spirit of God, personal because God is personal, infinite as partaking of the infinitude of the divine nature. Christ, no longer as of old visibly dwelling among men, is exalted ; yet the exaltation of him who was on earth the self-revelation of God through human life, in one aspect of it consists in an ever more complete permeation by him of human society and of the individuals composing it. But the divine action in which this is realized is termed that of the Spirit. For us as Christians, therefore, wherever the self-revelation of God appears, this is designated the Spirit (1 Cor. xii, 7). Thus we have three distinct ways of regarding God : as the Absolute Source and Ground of all, that is, God as he is in and for himself, yet not as

different from the essential nature which has come forth in revelation ; as disclosed in Jesus Christ, the principle of an eternal self-revelation of God ; as revealed in the perpetual manifestations of divine energy — from the side of God the self-communicating, from the side of the world the immanent, principle of the divine life, the Spirit.

(3) The doctrine of the immanence of the Spirit is, however, part of that wider movement which has from the first marked the progress of human thought. This is, in a word, the transition from the outer to the inner, from the limited to the universal, from the transient to the eternal — a process which has no sooner exhausted its momentum in this direction, the annulling of the finite and visible, than it returns upon itself and gives back to the visible and finite, or rather discovers in these, the eternal Spirit. This movement has value, therefore, in two ways. First, it represents a deepening consciousness that the world is ultimately spiritual, and thus lays a basis for the rational interpretation of life. It was in accordance with this principle that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews declared that Christ “through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish unto God” (Heb. ix, 14). The law of self-devotion to the good of others, leading even to the giving up of the bodily organism, an action which had seemed alien and hence contradictory to man’s earlier thought of his life, since it appeared to be the destruction of the life itself, was discovered to be not the inevitable dissolution, but the sole way to the maintenance of that life in its ideal worth.

Again, a particular phase of the increasing spiritual significance of life is the developing ethical interpre-

tation of it. Thus not only in the whole of man's life, but in the world itself, is disclosed a moral order which is the ever widening expression of a divine gracious will. Accordingly, revelation and indeed the entire relation of God to the world come to be conceived of not as physical, spasmodic, or even miraculous in the traditional sense of that word, but as constant, spiritual, and making for righteousness. The substitution of this doctrine of the ethical immanence for all mythological or deistic notions of God, is not only the culmination of one long process of the evolution of the fundamental idea of the world, but the prophetic beginning of another, even longer, process of the ethicizing of all the individual, social, and religious relations of men. This is indeed the Dispensation of the Spirit, through which God is bringing forward the consummation of the age.

If, then, according to the ultimate New Testament idea, the Spirit is the principle of the immanent divine activity, two different results will be referred to this source. In the first place, all kinds of gifts as equipment for service; and then, deepest and most essential of all, the ethical redemptive aspect. It remained for Paul to give to this reality the significance which belonged to it in relation to the new life for both the individual and the community. Without going into the details of his presentation, it may be summarized in the fact that he attributes the entire renewal of redeemed humanity to the divine Spirit. The product of this activity is a "new creation," the sense of "adoption," breaking the power of sin, "the earnest of our inheritance," transformation of the "natural" to the "spiritual" man, union with Christ, beginning of the

fruits of the Spirit, entrance into organic union with those who are sharing the same life, thus a new personal, social, religious life. "A new life" is at once the most comprehensive and the most characteristic designation of the work of the Spirit. That which Christ came to give begins here: life, true life, life in all the powers of being as opposed to the law of sin, and death which set in with sin; life in the rational part of man, so that he has "the mind of Christ;" life in the spirit, which is the highest aspect of the personality roused and quickened by the Spirit of God; life in the will enfeebled under the habit of sin; life in the heart, so that peace and joy take the place of the discord and misery of the past; life in respect of others, so that we share a common consciousness; and finally, life even of the body, which, although it is to pass under the inevitable dominion of corruption, is but the prophetic symbol of a new, incorruptible, glorious body, when at last "death is swallowed up in life."

In answer, therefore, to the inquiry concerning the relation of the new life to the Holy Spirit, it must be said that its origin as a personal experience is presented under a double aspect: on one side is faith, the subjective, human element of this experience; on the other side is the objective element, the Holy Spirit. Or faith may be regarded as the outer, the Spirit of God as the inner, aspect of this experience. But under whatever figure this reality is conceived, here is the origin of a divine-human, essentially ethical unity of man and God. In the first instant of the new life, whether this is the experience of an adolescent or of an adult, both are given, and each is equally necessary. The initiative, indeed, and the quickening

belong to the Spirit, yet the awakening and the response belong to man. These two aspects may be distinguished for logical convenience, but since they are never separate in the reality, they must not be permanently sundered in thought. Even the discrimination of the human from the divine element will be at the best imperfect ; in entering upon the new life, we begin to be " partakers of the divine nature."

IX

IDENTIFICATION OF MEN WITH CHRIST: II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW LIFE

So far we have considered the Christian life in its beginning. Since, however, this life is at no time either stationary or complete, but is, according to its essential nature, one of development, we have now to discuss the ideal, the principle, the content, and the conditions of its unfolding.

The Christian life is from the first and forever a divine-human reality. If, on the one hand, sanctification were presented as a purely divine work, it might indeed be supernatural, but only by denial, first, of the relative independence of the creature, and, secondly, of any ethical quality in this process. If, on the other hand, it were conceived of as simply a human work, then it would be robbed of any redemptive or even religious import and its true character destroyed. Neither of these factors can be thus exalted at the expense of the other; both are integral elements of the work of sanctification, and one is no less necessary than the other. If the individual consciousness rises out of and rests back upon an infinite consciousness, of which every human consciousness is a distinct but not wholly separate aspect; if religion is not simply the elevation of the human soul into communion with the Infinite and Eternal, but also the indwelling of God in the recipient, filial life; and if

Christianity is the highest form under which the ideal life is realized in relation to God, then not God alone, and not man alone, but both in the perfect mutuality of love are the forever essential elements of the unfolding Christian person.

I. The ideal aim of the progressive Christian life is the development of personality according to the divine type. We have now to consider how this realization takes place.

At the threshold of the actual human life we discover, just as we should expect, two sets of factors which emerge counter to each other, but which, once reconciled, lead life to its consummation. There is the opposition of nature and spirit, — nature, which reveals itself in impulses and appetencies and desires, each of which exists in and for itself with no conscious relation to the others, and spirit, that self-conscious ideal principle which in its beginning is other and higher than the appetites and desires, or than any changing aspect of the phenomenal life ; these two emerge and exist together in every human breast. Passion blindly strives against the reason, and the reason refuses to yield itself to the dominance of passion. From this condition, then, arises an antagonism which characterizes all moral and spiritual development.

This inevitable discord is intensified by the fact that the natural passions do not exist in quietness and simplicity side by side with the spiritual principle. These are more intense and violent, their self-assertion is more extreme in man than in the lower animals, since the reason has lent to them a keener perception of ends and a larger capacity of perverted realization. And the nature of man is not at birth a *tabula rasa*,

but a bundle of inherited powers, organically related so as to perpetuate the biases and dispositions of ancestral traits.

In the case of those who at maturity enter the Christian life, a character is already in possession of the field, partly formed indeed, with elements of good and evil mixed, varying greatly in different persons, more or less divergent from the Christian type. It is a peculiarity of the psychical as truly as of the physical organism that it is an automaton. Several facts are here in evidence. All action has both an outer and an inner aspect: viewed from its outer aspect, it is transient, passing away with the expression of it; from its inner aspect, something of every action drops into and becomes a part of the subconscious life. Here the essence of all deeds persists, not in unrelated *residua*, but, according to laws which are not fully understood, organized into an ever more comprehensive system of impulses, instincts, desires, tendencies, and affinities, in a word, what is called the "second nature." These persisting elements of personal action enter into vital correlations with hereditary appetencies and dispositions, by which they are profoundly modified. One's real character, therefore, may be widely different from that of which one is at any given moment conscious. Even he who knows most of himself becomes aware of his true self only as his actual life swings around and comes in contact with those several phases of the outer world which are fitted to awaken and call out his subconscious latent potencies. Moreover, since this subconscious region of man's life is not unresponsive to the outer world, its hidden energy rises and unites itself in a subtle and powerful manner with all

the conscious processes of life, — thoughts, feelings, and choices, — coloring, stimulating, disturbing, and not seldom paralyzing them. If at any moment man is what he would be, he is also what he would not be. From the opposition between the growing personal spirit, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the as yet raw material of natural impulse and desire, unhappily affected perhaps by heredity and by one's own past action, arise the struggle, the pathos, and the frequent tragedy of moral experience. This tension raised to its highest pitch wins its most vivid concrete description in Paul's cry of a divided nature (Rom. vii, 7-25).¹ Here is the key which unlocks for us the character of Jacob and Balaam and David, of Peter and Augustine.

It is not, however, to be supposed that the automatic aspect of personality is confined wholly to the evil; on the contrary, there is a residuum of good which is no less effectual than the evil in its influence upon character. Whatever has been affirmed concerning the power of evil in the organization of the personality is also with an opposite reference to be affirmed of the good.

In the development of the personal life, the training of the will is naturally the finest expression, as it is the most difficult task, of the spirit; indeed, from one point of view, a "completely fashioned will" is a supreme aspect of human life. This means that nature has been lifted above the threshold of consciousness and has repeatedly submitted itself to the dominion of the spirit and to the law of rational ends, and then, as it has sunk back into the region of the

¹ Cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, Book VIII, chap. v.

subconscious, has carried down with it the stamp of its submission. It thus becomes no longer mere nature, or nature as conditioned by heredity, or even by one's past evil action, but a "second nature," transformed, unified, henceforth under "the law of the spirit of life."

The process outlined above has been thus far described in terms of psychology and ethics. It is also religious. To call it simply ethical would be to convey a wrong impression. We are here concerned primarily with the religious aspect of the process. By this it is meant that we are dealing with the highest form of life known to us. It is divine-human. Even if one does with serious and often anxious pains work out his salvation, yet it is because God energizes within him for the realization of the divine gracious will. Paul has clearly described this in his two great confessions. In one (Rom. vii-viii, 2), after picturing the long and desperate struggle between his mind and his flesh, between his better self and "nature" in him, which had regularly resulted in victory for the flesh and in bitter self-reproach, forcing from him the cry of moral incapacity, he tells of a new type of life to which hitherto he had been a stranger. He then conceives of himself as placed in this new order of life, and his very first words are significant: he thanks God through Jesus Christ. He then admits that although the moral antinomy still exists, yet now it is not felt to be hopeless; there is no divine judgment against those who are in Christ; and this must be so, since in these the principle of sin is annulled by the new ideal of life realized in Christ, with whom they have identified themselves. In the second confession

(Gal. ii, 20), he declares that he both lives and does not live; that his life is one not of human striving simply, but one whose essential and dominant spirit is divine. The characteristic of this type of personality is that it is lifted above the arena of purely moral struggle and set in that sphere of life-fellowship with God in which the past discord is hushed in the peace of reconciliation and the assurance of final victory over evil. The point of view ceases to be wholly ethical; it is now religious. The good, in one sense indeed yet far off, is in another sense already attained. Not that evil is not still present, or that the strife is ended, or nature wholly responsive to spirit, or the empirical man completely identified with the Spirit of God, but sin in any form and evil in any degree are now alien to the organic principle of the present life. It has been dethroned and its supremacy broken. Now at last its true nature is exposed. It does not belong to human life. It is evanescent. It must pass away. Virtually as well as ideally, the Christian is dead to sin and alive unto God. Already Christ lives in that life of his which is still more or less subject to the flesh. The Spirit of God dwelling in him is quickening the potentialities of his being, so that henceforth the infinite moral goal, instead of paralyzing endeavor, beckons him forward with deathless hope. Accordingly, at the inmost centre of one's being, where alone is eternal life and blessedness, the conflict is ended, the victory won. It only remains now in patience to win one's soul—in the discipline of life progressively to realize the Christian type of personality.

Attention may here be directed to two aspects of

the life of the spirit. First, the very existence of this life is conditioned on the continuous conflict between the lower and the higher. For like all other life, the spiritual life maintains itself only as it takes up and assimilates to its own end the unorganized material within its reach — appetites, desires, and ambitions of the self, social relations in the family, the state, and the church, and all those relations which we sustain to the physical world in virtue of our birth into it.

Secondly, this process is eternal ; not simply because the ideal is unattainable, — the goal a flying one, — but because an exhaustless capacity of inner unfolding constitutes the very essence of human personality. By creation God is planting and by the gospel he is awakening in humanity an infinite possibility of individual and social good. From one point of view, then, the ideal is in part attainable and in part unattainable ; it is attainable inasmuch as at every moment a portion of the possible passes into realization ; unattainable, so far as the infinite aspect will forever stretch beyond the farthest reach of human achievement. From another point of view, however, the ideal is differently conceived. In the law of its development humanity bears within itself a type of reality which belongs to no other created thing. It is inalienably and forever human. The ideal is, therefore, within the bosom of humanity itself. Humanity starts with this in its very constitution. Yet since this immanent ideal remains latent and unknown until unfolded and thus disclosed in the process of life, and it is in this way susceptible of an endless development, the ideal, both in its original ground and in its future expansion, is infinite. Thus it may be said that the ideal of

the Christian life is not one yet to be attained, but is already present in our own being as the spiritual principle of all progress, and that all progress is the gradual emergence in ethical and spiritual forms of that goal which is implicit in our essential nature.

The organization of life according to the divine type involves not only the individual as such, but also the social body. The Christian ideal centres partly in the individual and partly in society ; in the Scriptures the emphasis is continually shifting from one to the other. There is a religious individualism and a religious collectivism. These are the two foci in the teachings of Jesus ; now he appears to lay supreme emphasis upon one and now upon the other ; or he passes from one to the other as if conscious of the perfect harmony between them. The truth is, that the perfect life includes both. Human life is a unity, of which the individual and society are the essential constituents. The individual cannot be perfect apart from society ; and a better form of social life is possible only through higher types of individual character.

The realization of the ideal of a redeemed society takes place along two great lines. First, by the reconciliation of all those forms of social life which in their several stages seem to be not only diverse but hostile to one another and even mutually exclusive. There are, for example, what history has always had to record, the apparently conflicting claims of society and the individual. In the development of the race, these two elements have been set over against each other in a sharp and not seldom relentless antagonism. The reason for this antagonism is plain. On the one hand, to the undeveloped consciousness of the "natural"

man, his own life seems to him a closed circle of individual interests, capable of reaching its ends by its own unaided exertions, and, therefore, necessitated to resent intrusion from all other lives. On the other hand, there is a social consciousness in which corporate interests seem to be all-inclusive, wherein the aims of the individual are submerged in the larger good of the entire body. There is no room for the individual as such. Since society is an organism, the individual has no justification, save in organic relation to it; his personal ends are identical with those consciously aimed at by the organic whole. There are, accordingly, in the development of these opposite forms of consciousness two principal extremes: in the individual, an isolated and exaggerated self-assertion over against the life of others; in society, an ignoring or an irrational oppression of the individuals who compose the social body.

There is another conflict in social development which demands reconciliation — a rigid opposition between those aspects of life which belong to the present and those which are a survival from the past. Christian society as it exists at any given time is a resultant of all past forces; it is therefore conservative. There is indeed within it both an impulse and a place for advance, but only so far as this is organically related to an order grounded in the past. Society violently reacts against innovations which do not vitally connect themselves with existing conditions. Instances of such antagonism are extremely numerous. In the theoretic sphere we have the so-called conflict of science with theology, of present knowledge with tradition, of philosophy with faith, of the hypothesis of evolution with

all previous notions of the origin and order of the world. In the sphere of practical affairs are those institutions and customs which exist at any given period as the embodiment of radically different political, industrial, or other social ideals.

If, then, society is to realize the Christian ideal, it must bring into organic relation with itself every fragmentary form which emerges anywhere as an expression of its manifold energy. From no one has this law received truer statement than in the teaching of the Apostle Paul (cf. Eph. iv). A burning point of stress and difficulty throughout the entire history of the kingdom of God is seen precisely here. Society has either despised those whom it regarded as its feeble or less necessary members, or else it has striven to crush those who have stood out against its ruling tendency. Either society has trampled on its own history, or the dead hand of the past has throttled progress in the institutions and habits of the present. Ideas and practices which conflict with tradition proceed by clearly marked stages to their goal in the social consciousness. There is, first, unyielding opposition, then, tentative efforts at reconciliation, and finally, the harmonizing of these hostile elements in a higher synthesis. And since every age is characterized by transition, in which industrial, economic, political, religious, and other social forms inherited from an earlier period are undergoing readjustment in view of new conceptions created by the present, we see how wide-reaching is the necessity for this fundamental law of reconciliation.

The other line along which the redeemed society moves to its goal is that of its thorough Christianiza-

tion. This consideration is not indeed radically different from the one last discussed, but the entire matter is regarded from a different point of view. If the whole of life is to be organized according to the divine type, then society no less than the individual falls under the same law. There is a Christian social ideal. This ideal, as well for society as for the individual, is distinct among all the types which are found in the historical life of the race, unique, more rational than they, the highest stage which the consciousness of man can reach. This ideal has several characteristics. (1) It perfectly exists for us only in its principle. This principle — love — has no meaning if we seek to interpret it for the individual alone. It is essentially social. It is the perfect mutuality of personal beings. (2) As in the case of the individual, so in that of the social ideal, its form is at a given time or place on the earth only in part attainable or even imaginable. Christian society has indeed realized a portion of what is possible to it in the moral and spiritual realm. With all its abuses and shortcomings, our Christian social world is not simply a “civilized heathenism,” but is still at heart essentially Christian. When, however, we address ourselves to the future, we are at once aware of our limitations. To no prophet has it been given to lift the veil and disclose all that lies beyond. A comparison of the actual course of events with the Apocalypses or Utopias of human imagination, whether inspired or not, reveals the narrow limitations within which the most gifted genius has to move when he seeks to transcend the present.

“What we shall be, God doth know ;
We cannot guess such height.”

(3) This ideal is realized only in and through human historical life. Jesus did not foretell the things that are to be, even if these were within the scope of his own knowledge, but he hands his disciples over to the tuition of the Holy Spirit, that is, to the inevitable discipline of social experience. Suppose one were to hold that as a mere matter of power the forms which the Christian social ideal is to assume in the distant future could be announced by divine authority, yet these must until their fulfillment remain in part unintelligible or else incredible. The life in which they emerge furnishes the only key for their interpretation.

The necessity for the Christianization or the realization of the social ideal as progressive appears from several considerations: (1) From the nature of the gospel as a principle of social renewal. Jesus definitely announced this law in the parable of the leaven (Matt. xiii, 33). However insignificant its beginnings in human society, it contains a universal element. The power of the gospel will not be exhausted, nor the prayer of Christ answered, nor the work of the Holy Spirit accomplished, nor the idea of redeemed humanity fulfilled, till the will of God is "done as in heaven, so on earth."

(2) In the relation of the Christian society to all the members of it, the same need appears. We have seen that personality is a social product. Society exists for the purpose of developing personality. Christian society is for man, and not man for society. Environment does not indeed explain everything, but the conditions in which one is born and reared determine to a large extent not only the form but also the content of one's conscious life. In all the relations which are

more distinctively personal, — the family, the school, industrial and commercial relations, social contacts, the civic order, the church, — the child, the pupil, the workman, the financier, the citizen, the adherent of the church absorb, in part unconsciously and in part consciously, the principles of the institutions and customs in the midst of which they live. There is no finer instance of this law than in the relation of language, on the one hand, to the collective experience which it both expresses and conserves, and, on the other hand, to the intellectual and spiritual life which it creates and fosters.

(3) Since, moreover, Christianity is not a static condition but a progressive development, and the Christian society is by its onward movement brought into contact with alien civilizations, it is ever taking up into union with its ruling ideas and habits elements which in their native form are more or less foreign to its genius. Examples of this are Greek philosophy in the early, Roman administrative and legal forms in a later, history of the church, and still later, notions derived from feudal customs. All such matters must be either Christianized, or, this proving impossible, they must be eliminated from the ideas and practices of the Christian community.

(4) In the midst of the progress of the Christian social life, conditions are continually developing which in their initial form and spirit are antagonistic to the gospel. The social questions which are the absorbing questions of our modern world are many of them of recent origin. They find their partial solution at the hand of jurisprudence, of statesmanship, of economics, of sociology, of theoretical and practical ethics, but,

since they are ultimately religious, they must look to Christian men for their final interpretation, and for bringing about their adjustment to the ideals of the gospel. They have without exception arisen in response to a deep, legitimate human want; the Christian community must therefore find their essential principle and organize the expression of it into harmony with the will of God. These newer conditions must be Christianized, in order to provide the fittest environment for the development of personality.

II. The principle of the Christian life is an ever more complete identification with Jesus Christ. If the meaning of the life of Christ is found in its perfect identification "with us men and for our salvation," then the life of men as Christians is measured by the degree of their response to his will for them. The result is a progressively realized unity of aim and inner spirit between the Christian and Christ.

In order to ascertain the nature of this identification, we have to pass in review three forms under which it is realized.

(1) There is identification with Jesus as a historical person. This does not mean that there is to be absolute sameness in the life of the disciple with that of Christ. On the contrary, that he was to be a spirit and not a form of life for men he already intimated to his disciples before his death, and hence it is that in the infinite advance of society in the realization of its ideal destiny, he who was the source of its beginning is likewise to be the inspiration of its endless advance. Thus men identify themselves with him, not by seeking to live just as he lived, but by being animated with his spirit.

This, however, raises the further question, whether and how far the earthly character of Jesus is imitable. Unless we are willing to introduce into man's life an element of despair, we must affirm that what Jesus was, man may become. Indeed, this is the new and deeper note which sounds all through the teaching of the New Testament, and which distinguishes it from all the philosophies of life which had prevailed before the Christian era. It suffices to refer to such of Jesus' words as those on following him, on perfection, the injunction to the rich young ruler, and the likeness of the servant to his master, together with the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. Moreover, words of Jesus, that the disciples share with him a common relation toward the Father, toward one another, and toward the world, evince the ideal likeness which subsists between him and them. In the interests of reality we must remain aloof from those representations of the work of Christ which describe it under the category of office rather than that of vocation. As Ritschl has so finely shown, the official aspect of the Saviour's life was secondary to that of his vocation; or rather, since Christ's vocation, viewed in relation to himself and to others, is essentially personal, and since, moreover, so many unreal associations have been connected with the term, "office," we would better replace the notion of office by that of vocation.¹ All that Jesus was and did, his ideal, his perfection, his service for men, was first of all personal, expressive of his inner spirit; and this is to reappear in the life of his followers.

Such imitation of the historical Jesus is, however,

¹ *Justification and Reconciliation*, p. 434, Eng. tr.

always approximate, never on earth perfectly realized. Yet even here we need carefully to define our meaning, lest hope be awakened only to be overwhelmed in despair. For it cannot be too strongly asserted that there is an inimitable aspect to the character of Jesus. Without exception through all the Christian centuries, the holiest of men have confessed that he immeasurably transcended their highest moral and spiritual attainment. And even to-day, with all that lies behind us in the evolution of personality, with a wealth of knowledge in psychology, in ethics, in social philosophy, and amidst disclosures of human power and aspiration undreamed of in the early church, still, in a far richer sense than at that time, Jesus stands both as the revelation of a new order of spiritual being and the distant goal toward which all moral excellence presses on. Men can no more overtake and pass that simple life of perfect openness to God and of perfect love to men than they can "paint the lily and adorn the rose." The very simplicity of it, in which lies the secret of its greatness, hides from him who only contemplates it the difficulty of reproducing it in a human life; only when through a long process of self-devotion to Christ one has sought to live as Jesus lived, does he understand how far beyond him still is that one who in Galilee and Judæa "went about doing good."

The impossibility of becoming wholly like the earthly Jesus is further evinced in the fact that while for all other men sin is an invariable experience, yet for him the original direction of his will never suffered deviation. Not once did he confess sin; no shadow of self-reproach ever darkened his pure spirit.

In him is no recovery of a lapsed virtue. On the contrary, the will of the Father finds in him a perfect expression in forms of human volition. What is ideally possible to others was by him in process of actualization from the beginning. Perfect likeness to the historical Jesus is thus in any case precluded for all men.

Yet the Scriptures witness to an ineradicable conviction that moral identification with Jesus is not a Utopian task. May not the clue we seek be found in the law of growth? If we hold fast the fact that the life of Jesus belonged to humanity, then it is not foreign to any follower of his. And the more nearly one realizes the ideal of human personality, the more he approximates the spirit of life which was disclosed in Jesus Christ.

(2) A second form in which identification of the Christian with Christ is realized is that of union with "the Living Christ." Many traces of this idea are found in the New Testament, as, for instance, Christ's promised presence with his disciples after his departure, and in the letters of Paul, where he refers to the Christ, not the earthly but the glorified One, who lives in the Christian and in whom the Christian now lives, and through contemplation of whom he is transformed into the image of his divine Lord.

This aspect of Christian experience, the immediateness of the relation of the soul to Christ, participation in the life of the glorified One, is a very real feature in the consciousness of Christians. This is assumed by Calvin in the declaration that from the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit (*testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum*), which does not originate in the

reason, comes the conviction that the Scriptures are from God.¹

“The Spirit breathes upon the Word
And brings its truth to light.”

To this is due also the “self-evidencing power of the gospel.”

We are thus brought to the test of experience. Here there can be no doubt as to the verdict. After Jesus' death, in spite of his complete physical disappearance, his disciples believed him still to be immediately and ever present in their conscious life. All that he had been to them while on earth, and more, he was in his continued relation to them in the spirit. Indeed, for this end it was better that he enter upon the perfect life of the spirit, henceforth unrestricted by bodily limitations, in order to reappear as a universal Presence, unseen, yet everywhere felt and known. There is thus an inner life of the soul, the source of which is not in man but in God. Its reality is believed in even when it is only partly understood, or is explained as containing elements or dependent on conditions which preclude the possibility of its existence. It is, in the last analysis, “mysterious and incommunicable.”²

Among the signs of the continued presence of the living Christ or of the Spirit in his followers, there is at the outset the deepening conviction that one has entered upon a distinctively Christian type of life. The Apostle, referring to a well-known Greek custom, designated this condition as that of “adoption” as sons of God. In consequence of this new relation to God,

¹ *Institutes*, Book I, chap. vii, 7.

² Cf. Herrman, *Communion of the Christian with God*, p. 17.

the Christian is ever more fully realizing in himself the filial spirit which animated Jesus with reference to the Father. Many evidences confirm one in the belief that Christ is in him — peace that follows sin forgiven ; growing sense of the graciousness and power of God's love ; for those who become Christians in mature years, an increasing emancipation from the slavery of sin and freedom from the paralyzing pains and sorrows of this lower world ; love for one's fellow-men ; a life developing in Christian graces, fruitful in well-doing. From these and other facts of experience one may safely infer that between him and the living Christ is an intimate life-union.

This certainty, however, is not simply subjective ; it rests on a valid objective reality — the inner working of the Spirit of Christ. Thus our profound conviction receives its divine confirmation. "The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the souls of believers, whereby the Spirit of God directly testifies to their spirit that they are children of God."¹ As at the beginning of the Christian life, so throughout the entire course of it, in all its deep experience of need, God authenticates his presence, his grace, but most of all his Fatherhood. Here is one of the ultimate facts of the religious life, — a fact of consciousness which one cannot prove to another, of which one can give but an imperfect account even to himself ; but which, once and again experienced, renders him who is the subject of it henceforth sure beyond a doubt that he belongs to the family of God.

In spite of the risk of fanatical interpretation, it must be held that there emerge in Christian conscious-

¹ Wesley, Second Discourse on "*The Witness of the Spirit.*"

ness sentiments and aspirations, ideas and aims, for which no other explanation suffices than that these are the work of God. In all ages men have been saturated with the sense of God. The divine meaning of the world was the only one of worth to them. Even life itself was a mission daily renewed from a will higher than their own. Socrates confessed that it was the unfailing presence of a divine power in the still background of his consciousness to which he owed his infallible intuition of duty. It was no mere rhetorical device when the poets of antiquity invoked the inspiration of God that they might worthily sing of

. . . "old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago."¹

What constituted any man a prophet in Israel was a consciousness of God more real than that of his own phenomenal and changing self. And the Apostles believed that God was energizing in them no less truly than he did in "the fathers," both to work and to will. Nor has the day of the immediate self-revelation of God in the hearts of men ceased; and the more certainly not, if we are now living in "the Dispensation of the Spirit." We have to go neither to Sinai nor to the Mount of Galilee. The Great Companion is not dead. God is withdrawn into no distant world, accessible to the dead alone. Still as of old the pure in heart see him. To him who keeps his commandments the living Christ manifests himself. No charism is needed other than any Christian may have, to be a temple of the Spirit, to be led by the Spirit, to be filled with the Spirit, to bring forth fruits of the Spirit.

By this it is not meant that one is at all times

¹ Wordsworth, *The Solitary Reaper*.

equally conscious of the Spirit of Christ, but only that the constant presence of this Spirit is the presupposition of all Christian experience. There are with every mature person hours, albeit rare, when, crushed with bereavement, or overwhelmed with suffering, or struggling with temptation, or longing for light, or alone and craving love, or face to face with death, he becomes conscious of Christ as the Life of his life. In such an hour one confesses : " It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me ; " and such confession is witness to present and continuous identification of the human with the divine, that is, with the living Christ.

(3) The living Christ with whom one is progressively identified must, however, be interpreted by the historical Jesus. For us there can be no " Christ of to-day " except as he is the unbroken continuation of the Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels. This is the meaning of that mystic allusion in the Apocalypse to the " Lamb in heaven " — the Lamb slain. We ourselves shall best understand the relation of the living to the historical Christ in the unfolding Christian experience, if we ask what was the attitude of the Apostles toward Christ as glorified. It appears that their belief in the character of his personal presence rested on four immovable bases.

(1) The first corner-stone of their belief — his self-revelation after his burial — is more and more recognized by scholars as a sure foundation. The assaults of Strauss and Renan upon this long-cherished citadel of the Christian faith, threatening to reduce the resurrection to myth or legend, although for a time producing widespread panic-fear, have in the last generation rapidly lost ground. Hostile attacks are no longer

organized, but if appearing at all are individual, and directed against certain insufficiently firm outposts. With increasing unanimity, men confess that the existence of the Christian church, the transformation of a dead hope into sudden, enthusiastic, and omnipotent faith in the living Christ, are not to be referred to fanaticism — a spirit which would welcome any notion, however unreal, if only it promised fuel to inflame still further their already excited feeling. Nor is it wholly explained by hallucination or illusion, thus due either to the creative fancy or to the mistaken interpretation of brooding love. After his death Jesus disclosed himself to the consciousness of the disciples and of Saul as alive. A discussion of the nature of this self-disclosure belongs to Apologetics; but whatever its mode, its reality and certainty were for these men absolutely beyond question. They were convinced beyond peradventure that he who had been crucified, dead, and buried was nevertheless the ever-living One, over whom death had no power. In that experience was the birth-hour of their eternal faith in him.

(2) This instant was not, however, alone in their experience. They believed that they stood in constant and continuous relation of inner dependence and loyalty toward him, that they were his representatives, that his Spirit was present with them as the source of their faith and service. As they could not conceive of him without his self-manifestation in his followers, so their own lives were inexplicable save as expressions of his indwelling power. They were “in Christ;” Christ lived in them; apart from him they could do nothing. From the unseen world he, the Lord of glory,

bestowed gifts and graces of personal life, according to his appointment originated the various functions and activities of the Christian community, inspired in his followers a love for men which sent them forth to proclaim the gospel of God's love, and accompanied their message with evidences of saving power. Thus between him and his followers is a relation of the most intimate and vital character. He is the vine, they are the branches. They are the members of that body of which he is the head. The church is the revelation on earth of the living One to whom has been given all authority and all power. He who was the Lord of the soul, Head of the church, and Saviour of men, occupies a unique relation to the world, its history, its ordered forces, and its future. His redemptive work is no segment, cut out and isolated from the rest of the universe, thus out of all organic relation to nature and history. But he who is the source and supporter of the renewed spirit is the Master of all those natural forces which may be either hostile or friendly to the feeble, unfolding life, the one also who is bringing forward the historical process so as to make it subservient to the kingdom of God.

(3) We have, moreover, to observe the indissoluble relation between the glorified Christ and the earthly Jesus. The Apostles do not conceive of him first at the ascension beginning to be clothed with those attributes of which until then he had been destitute. Nothing essentially new is affirmed of him in the other world which had not been manifested in him while yet on the earth. Already, while with the disciples, he had as Saviour communicated to them the forgiveness of sins, and as Lord called them to follow

him in a life of perfect self-surrender and of service to their fellow-men. Seeing him, they had seen the Father. The power which had penetrated to the deepest recesses of motive and choice and aim, which had transformed and exalted their poor selves, held within it both the promise and the potency by which all men were to be renewed; by this same power the institutions and customs of society were to become the changed expressions of the divine ideal. Nor were they unfamiliar with his relation to the physical world. The Gospels being witness, no region of nature was closed to his authority, but all alike confessed in him their plastic law. Thus the Apostles had only to take his earthly attributes and relations and activities, and set these in the light of eternity, in order to see in him the One who was all in all to their faith.

Finally, in the words of Jesus during his earthly life were the source and justification of all that they attributed to him as exalted. He declared that all authority had been given him, whether in heaven or on earth. He foretold his own exaltation. He prophesied that even from the hour of his violent death he would henceforth enter upon his glorious self-manifestation; from the heavenly world convict of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, draw all men to himself, and guide them into all the truth. No sphere of human interest is excluded from the circle of his claim. It is well also to consider the nature of the power which he preannounced for himself at the right hand of God. It is precisely the same power that he made use of in Galilee and Judæa — personal, spiritual, ethical, redemptive, the revelation and the gift of love.

This conception of the relation of the living Christ

to the human historical Jesus, in which is mirrored the faith of the Apostolic church, has valid claims upon us. For only in this way are we guarded from a purely mystical or arbitrary construction of Christ's present reality for faith. We must believe in the perfect continuity of the self-conscious spirit of Christ; hence in his exaltation he is the same that "descended into the lowest parts of the earth;" the essential content of his personality remains unchanged. Further, what is the meaning of Paul's retreat to Arabia, and later of his consultation with the Apostles at Jerusalem, if not to reassure himself that his gospel of the risen and glorified Christ contained only those realities which were warranted by the facts concerning the historical Jesus? Moreover, why should there be with us such painstaking study of the Gospels, so far as they speak of the earthly Christ, if on his exaltation he broke off the thread of his personal consciousness and became a different being? Indeed, if he were to become a different being from what he was in principle on earth, what facilities are available to us for ascertaining such a fact? Finally, if we suppose that any relation of the exalted One is possible which is not already implied in the historical Jesus, how does it happen that neither mysticism nor any other mode of communion with Christ has produced either a single new principle of his glorified being or an added element of his personal action, beyond what John and Peter became aware of in their intercourse with him?

III. In considering the content of the developing Christian life, several aspects of it demand discussion, such as sin in relation to it, good works, and perseverance.

(1) The relation of sin to the Christian life. That one is a Christian is no guarantee that he is henceforth wholly free from sin; on the contrary, in every one who has entered upon the new life there is more or less of sin. This is witnessed to by the Scriptures, which from beginning to end abound in instances of men, some of them even the most eminent of the servants of God, whose repentance, confession of wrongdoing, longing for pardon, struggle against overmastering temptation, combat with evil ever renewed and often resulting in momentary defeat, are among the saddest and most tragic facts of human experience. Instead of putting an end to the moral conflict, the beginning of the new life would seem to be rather the introduction to an inevitable, violent, and long-continued conflict between flesh and spirit, between the human and the divine, between man and God.

What the Scriptures witness to is confirmed by the experience of all Christian men. The saintliest souls are the most open in their acknowledgment of the baleful power of sin. Augustine and St. Francis, Thomas à Kempis and Pascal, Luther and Edwards, never cease to confess and lament their shortcomings. Indeed, the sense of sin may be said to be the one dark shadow never completely lifted from even the holiest human heart.

We have now to inquire, What is the actual condition of the Christian life, so far as sin appears in it? We have to recall the position at the beginning of this chapter, that in the subconscious, automatic region of our being there are survivals of past habitual forms of action, which remain to energize in future feelings,

thoughts, and choices. This is as true of the renewed as of the unrenewed life. It may be a surprise to the Christian man himself, but in the very nature of personal development it is in no way strange that principles of action long since repudiated and supposed to be impotent still successfully, even though it be but for a moment, reassert themselves in deed or will. One ought rather to expect such reanimation, and to be surprised if it does not occur. These forms of action will, however, come up in a more isolated way than of old, and they will more feebly ally themselves with the thoughts and feelings formerly associated with them. The evil past will break into consciousness as an intruder; perhaps in particular forms it will be subdued more easily and quickly than formerly. Be this as it may in different persons, the point is that one must expect that his past will live on in every present moment and influence him for good or evil. This is the law of habit, without which there could be no development, no organization of personality, no coherence and intelligible unity of character, in a word, no such reality as growth in grace or sanctification.

Moreover, every Christian life is continually passing into conditions which by their very strangeness provide material for new temptation. Even if one has mastered the moral conditions with which he has become familiar, still when transplanted into changed circumstances, such as coming into sudden possession of great wealth or irresponsible political power, or entering a social group which is destitute of the accustomed ethical sanctions, he may prove unequal to the strain, and his religious life, never perhaps too robust, yield something of its integrity. Many a man

would have lived and died in the odor of sanctity had he remained in the place and conditions of his birth.¹ Jesus gave profound expression to this law in his later intercourse with the disciples — the moral and religious peril of unaccustomed conditions.

Once more, there are in the Christian, as in other men, sins which originate in the head rather than in the heart, which therefore partake more of ignorance than of willfulness. The Old Testament gave imperfect expression to the feeling which underlies this distinction, in its provision for inadvertent or unwitting as discriminated from deliberate and purposed sins. Indeed, the Old Testament traces the very origin of sin to ignorance. And it is undoubtedly true that desires may be felt and deeds done in one stage of enlightenment which would be no longer possible in a further stage (cf. Mark x, 35-45; xiv, 27-31, 66-72; Gal. i, 13-23; ii, 11-21). Yet ignorance may be adduced, not in order to nullify, but certainly to mitigate the gravity of sin (Luke xii, 47, 48).

Under whatever conditions sin originates in the follower of Christ, two things are to be carefully differentiated. First, since sin is and can be an experience of only a part — and that the worst part — of human volition, and in principle it can never be harmonized with the higher forms of the will, it is felt as an alien element in the consciousness. There are indeed instances in which under strong emotional revulsion at the initial stage of the Christian life, many earlier forms of temptation have completely lost their appeal to the will. But in all cases, sin henceforth sustains no organic relation to the consciousness of the new

¹ Cf. Butler, *Analogy of Religion*, Part I, chap. iv.

life. It is that which one has refused to take up into the unity of his aim. It may continue to try to lord it over the appetites and desires and through these to get dominion over the body, or even over the more spiritual part of the man, but it has been virtually dethroned. Under whatever disguise it appears, it is a usurper. No sooner is its presence recognized, than it must be consciously and heartily repudiated, its claims utterly disallowed, even parleying with it sharply broken off.

Secondly, sin may be conceived of as that in the nature of one who is becoming a Christian which has not yet submitted itself to the law of Christ, which, therefore, has not been brought into organic relations with the unifying principle of the new life. This organic principle of unity which is in process of realization in consciousness is the "spirit;" but over against this spirit there emerges in experience the "flesh;" and these are in irreconcilable hostility to each other. One is conscious of being alternately urged in totally opposite directions, — impelled by the flesh or animated by the spirit, — each intensified in its activity by an undefined jealousy and hatred of its adversary. The individual has a desire to identify himself now with the spirit and now with the flesh; but neither the flesh nor the spirit will permit its antagonist to come to unhindered fulfillment (Gal. v, 17). Yet the conflict, although severe, is not hopeless; indeed, conflict is the way of hope. Just because flesh in its primary meaning is the sensuous, and spirit the ideal side of human nature, and because so long as we live here below neither side can realize itself apart from the other, a reconciliation between them must be effected.

Inasmuch as the spirit is the ideal, divine aspect of human nature, this reconciliation takes place only when the spirit penetrates the impulses and desires of the flesh and gives to them its own higher meaning and end.

Whether, then, sin be conceived of as the evil aspect of a divided will or the as yet unspiritualized element of nature, in either case the task of the Christian man is plain: to reproduce the life of God within the narrow sphere of his own personal consciousness and activity; completely to identify his will with the will of Christ; and in all his social relations to become an ever more perfect organ for the Holy Spirit. As thus the spirit — and through the spirit the body — of the Christian is lifted into constant and ever more thorough union with God in Christ, it freely and in every part reacts to the gracious and transforming power of God. And into the sweep of the divine life, in which the renewed soul continually lives, all the eddying dispositions, the reluctant feelings, the competing aims, even the opposing passions and ambitions, are progressively drawn and by it borne onward into the still depths of eternal life, where the ideal and the real, the divine and the human, merge into and are forever one (1 Cor. xv, 28).

(2) The special problems that come into the discussion of good works, or the law of spiritual self-expression, have relation to faith and to grace.

The doctrine of good works, so far as it may be drawn from the New Testament, is plain and unequivocal. It is, in part, to the effect that these are the expression of the inner life of one who is in union with the Spirit of God. There is, on the one hand, a natural necessity for the life to embody itself in deeds;

on the other hand, deeds sustain to life the relation of fruit to the tree (Matt. vii, 16-20). These two aspects are in fact inseparable; if one knows the precise nature of a deed, by the same token he knows the spirit which animated it; and if he possessed the gift which belongs to the Searcher of hearts, of understanding the innermost spirit of man, he would also infallibly perceive the exact nature of the action by which this is declared.

Moreover, good works may be identified with another aspect of personality, — those inner forms of the moral and religious life which originate in the deep springs of action, such as love, peace, patience, gentleness, purity of heart. Asked to define the “works of God,” Jesus gathers them all into a single work, and that not an outward deed, but a permanent aim of the will, — belief in the Son of God, of which the whole of life is to be henceforth the manifold expression. From the description just given, therefore, good works may be regarded as the characteristic and enduring forms in which the new life realizes itself.

In order to make this position more intelligible, we may refer to a well-known law of profound significance in the development of personality: “Every state of consciousness tends to realize itself in appropriate action.” This law is wrought into the very structure of the nervous organism, the two functions of which are stimulation and reaction. At the nervous centres is such an adjustment that the incoming nervous process, instead of disappearing or being promiscuously scattered, tends to overflow and pass out along the motor tracts, thus expressing and completing itself. In lower forms of life and in man’s physical organ-

ism this is the symbol and silent prophecy of the law of consciousness stated above.

If, now, we consult the consciousness itself, we come upon two laws which belong together. First, no idea or emotion or conation exists in and for itself alone. The consciousness may at a given time be more strongly marked in one than in the other of these aspects, but the others are also present and form integral parts of the conscious state. Each of these states tends to realize itself in the form of the others—an idea to give rise to an emotion and to choice, a choice to become self-conscious and agreeable, and an emotion to disclose both its rational content and its teleological import.

The second law is the one already formulated, that every idea, every emotion, every choice, tends to embody itself in some form of outward expression and completing action.

If we apply these laws to the Christian life, we see the human process through which faith declares itself. An analysis of faith on its subjective side reveals the three elements which traditional theology has found in it: knowledge, assent, trust; an element of thought, of feeling, of will, and these in relation to the supreme Reality of existence. Since this is the case, it cannot be that a consciousness quickened by the highest ethical and spiritual truth, kindled by the most ardent emotion, and striving after the ideals that belong to the life of God, remains self-contained and therefore unexpressed; rather must such a spirit follow the law which is as universal as consciousness. It will externalize itself. It will flow out and thus realize itself in some appropriate form of action—in good works.

It is thus evident that good works sustain a rela-

tion, on the one hand, to faith, on the other, to grace or the Holy Spirit. If faith is, as we have affirmed, self-identification with the life of God, then in every Christian consciousness are the two elements, the human and the divine, and every action will in its own way express these realities. The question whether, in a normal life, one can be saved by faith apart from works, or by works apart from faith, or whether works are necessary in addition to faith, has no basis in Christian experience, and could never have been seriously considered if the answer had not been bound up with mistaken doctrines of religion, of ethics, and of philosophy. It is only in theology, however, that such notions force themselves upon attention; in real life, faith and works have never been and can never be separated.

Good works in relation to grace or the Spirit of God must not be so defined as by the very terms to be robbed of their human quality, that is, of one of the constituent elements of their goodness. No one is at liberty to adopt a view of human nature which is deistically separated from God and then to pronounce it totally impotent in respect of the good. Human nature is never found either isolated from God or utterly corrupt in will. No good work is indeed possible apart from grace, just as no action of man's spirit takes place except as God energizes within. Good works are the fruit of that mysterious union of God and man in the new life, which can be referred neither wholly to God nor wholly to man. Here is no quietism, in which man is passive, God alone being active; and no doctrine of man's self-sufficiency from which God is absent. There are indeed moments when

the soul appears to itself to be passive, humbling itself under the mighty hand of God, waiting for peace and comfort from above, simply resting while the forces of the spirit are renewed from the Eternal; and there are times when all the energies of the being are called into play, in resistance to evil, steadfastness in duty, fortitude in peril, sympathy with the outcast. But analysis of such extremes of experience, instead of showing that either God alone or man alone is active in them, only brings into clearer light the deep, unbroken unity which marks the Christian life and convinces us that, however intensely felt may be one or other of these aspects in consciousness, the presence of either there involves the presence also of its correlate.

This law has received its classic statement from the Apostle Paul, by whom the antithesis of the human and the divine energy in the new life, forever irreconcilable in philosophy, is in the consciousness of the Christian reconciled (Phil. ii, 12, 13). If the fruit is not simply from the tree, however healthy and beautiful, but also from the sun, whose quickening light, by a subtle, teleological touch, stimulates every one of the myriads of cells to the production of the harvest, and yet the tree itself, with a relative independence and a uniqueness all its own, "brings forth fruit after its kind," why should not the good fruit of a good life in like manner have its immediate source in the individual, but its ultimate source only in God? The works of man become in truth the "works of God;" the highest human ethical qualities and deeds are the "fruits of the Spirit." The rich clusters of loving service are not from the branch alone, but also from the Vine, in whom the branches have their true life.

(3) The law of spiritual habit, so far as it finds support in the New Testament, is that on God's part there is provision for final salvation for all who "commit their souls to him in well doing." All his promises are certain, and his providence and grace are an infinite protection to those who trust in him; on man's part is an increasing assimilation of divine grace, and faithful and steadfast devotion to the supreme ethical ideal.

In our appeal to Christian experience, we have to remind ourselves of the nature of regeneration, or conversion, or awakening, as witnessed to in that experience. Here it suffices to recall what was affirmed in the discussion of the Beginning of the New Life. Under whatever form this new life originates, — and the form is never alike in any two persons, — it is only a beginning of a process which may go on to completion, or may be arrested at any point and brought to a tragic end. Jesus offers a true analogy of it in the account of the seed growing secretly (Mark iv, 26-29). In addition, in the parable of the sower there is sketched in broad outline not only the differing conditions in which the life begins, but also the graded and contrasting development of that life with its varied outcome in different individuals, — the faith not taking deep root, soon discouraged and perishing; the faith at the outset vigorous indeed, but not holding its own amidst more vigorous, competing aims; and the faith growing steadily and maturing its fruit unto eternal life. In all alike there was initial life, even though in some it failed of perfect development. For the only test of life which is valid in our modern world is not a theory as to how it came to be, nor speculation

concerning its ultimate destiny, but simply this — life itself.

Although the doctrine of perseverance is thus in its traditional form untenable, yet it contains a double truth of priceless value. First, for him who is conscious of having the filial spirit, the Fatherhood of God contains the pledge that the infinite riches of the divine good are and are to be his for the progressive realization of perfected sonship. On the one hand, no power outside of God and man is able to cause apostasy (Jno. x, 28, 29); and on the other hand, the gracious purpose of God contains a principle of measureless transformation. For this end Christ gave his life, the quickening Spirit dwells within, daily strength is provided for daily need, and the hope of heaven completes the narrowing vista of this mortal life. Secondly, since every one's world is related to his consciousness and is constituted by it, and since the longer one habituates himself to the practice of the new life the more his desires, his aims, his thoughts, his very nature even, become Christ-like, we have the strongest psychological ground for expecting a continuous and increasing development of the personality after the Christian type. It is in accordance with this law that the well-known distinction was drawn between *posse non peccare* (able not to sin) and *non posse peccare* (not able to sin). One passes gradually from a condition where owing to particular volition he could refrain from a given evil, to a condition where the will is so thoroughly ethicized and spiritualized that there would be no motive from without or from within sufficient to persuade him to a wicked choice. This is the ideal destination of one born of God (1 Jno. iii, 9).

IV. In considering the conditions under which the Christian life develops, three aids to it require attention — the Word of God, Christian discipline, and prayer.

(1) What, then, is the Word of God, or the type and power of the new life with which we are here concerned, and how are we to ascertain its nature? The answer may be found in two ways. One is by a study of the Scriptures to determine that central reality to which all else in the life of Israel was tributary, which gave to the religion of Israel its distinction in relation to the world religions, which makes the Scriptures a unique literature among all human writings, and which, finally, constitutes the message with which every minister of Christ is intrusted — the secret power of every renewed heart. This can be nothing else than the disclosure of God's gracious will to draw men out of their sin into filial relation with the heavenly Father. Its single note is redemptive love, a love yearning, seeking, finding, renewing, forgiving, sanctifying those that were estranged, comforting sad hearts with sympathy that turns sorrow into a nameless peace, waking and satisfying the longing for eternal life in God. That which penetrates and transforms the sinful heart, consoles it in its grief, and crowns its deathless hope with the assurance of heaven is the glad tidings of the grace of God. This can be no theory about the Bible, such as its inspiration, its inerrancy, its infallibility, its authority; nor is it a confession formulated by council of ancient or modern church, or any dogma, hoary with age, able to appeal to the testimony of great names. It is not a reality which requires to be illumined by prophecy, so as to

be made more manifest than when shining by its own light; and it could not be attested by miracle, thus becoming more credible, as if it were in need of external authentication. The gospel is not identical with the canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments; it does not exactly coincide with any letter of Paul, or even with the Gospels, whether Synoptic or Johannean; it is not bound up essentially with any single fact as reported in the life or the death of Jesus. It is indeed in all, yet not completely present or exhausted in any one of these. The Word of God is that reality in the Scriptures, although it is not simply there, which has life in God for its end, that is, to reveal his inappeasable hostility to sin and his infinite grace toward the sinner, to reconcile the penitent son to the forgiving Father, to fathom the lowest depths of the heart, and there, by a mysterious and mighty energy, quicken into intense and lasting activity desires and aspirations that link man with God and with his fellow-men in the ideal unity of love and service — a family of God.

A second way of ascertaining the nature of the Word of God is to consult every variety of Christian experience. Let testimony be sought from rich and poor, from the densely ignorant as well as from the highly enlightened, from men of affairs, from poets and philosophers and scientists, from those who have been rescued out of gross degradation and from those who have never known any other than the Christian life; in all these persons alike, with or without historical knowledge or a critical theory of the facts of the New Testament, with or without a philosophy or a theology, not seldom with irrational notions as to the

great outstanding features of Christian belief, there has been created a new and higher, a supernatural, divine consciousness. For this experience, they have but a single explanation: they are what they are through the gospel of the grace of God. It may have come to them as a breath, a spirit from God (Is. lv, 11); or as a fire, at first smouldering, becoming ever more intense, at length consuming their sin, or as a hammer crushing their stony heart of pride and self-will (Jer. xxiii, 29); or as a sword with unerring touch, piercing, dividing, and laying bare the hidden and most intricate motives of the soul (Heb. iv, 12); or as a voice melting with entreaty and sweet with gracious promise of rest to the weary (Matt. xi, 28, 29), and of forgiveness to the son returning to the Father (Luke xv, 20). But whatever the way of approach or feeling awakened in any responsive heart, the gospel is for such a one "God's power unto salvation" (Rom. i, 16).

The Word of God and the gospel are then one and the same reality. And if the gospel is that through which Christian experience has come into being, then it must ever afterwards be to that life the source of a deeper apprehension and a more complete appropriation of the life of God. It enters the heart of each one at a particular point of need, but it takes its place at once as an all-sufficient minister of the spiritual life, calling up in consciousness and at the same time satisfying every further need. The Apostle Paul knows of no way by which the Christian life may be maintained outside of the gospel in which it originated — having begun in the Spirit, it must complete itself in the Spirit; and in a solemn formula he twice

anathematizes those who would substitute another message for the gospel he had proclaimed. Involved in this position of the Apostle is, however, another argument for holding fast to the gospel: it reveals a type of life and provides power for its realization which is found nowhere else. Since the life of the Christian, whatever of mystery it contains, is the product of the human reaction to the revelation of God in Christ, it is plain that this revelation is an indispensable objective reality — the spiritual environment without which the new personality cannot come to perfection. In several ways this environment is constituted; there is, for example, a Christian social atmosphere, or particular persons through whom the gospel shines almost by its own pure radiance. Here too is the ground of the church's insistence that the Scriptures, although originally written in tongues unknown to the great body of Christians, "are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come, that the word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have life."¹ In this condition lies also the strongest argument for the Christian practice of preaching, — that spiritual interpretation of life in the light of the gospel, and of the gospel with reference to life. Whatever may be true of exceptional persons under exceptional circumstances, the average Christian will find in the Scriptures as preached and as read effective means for the culture of Christ-likeness.

We must, however, define still more closely the term,

¹ *Westminster Confession*, chaps. i, viii.

“Word of God.” It was no accident that, very early in the church, among the titles associated with Christ was that of the Word or the Word of God (Jno. i, 14; 1 Jno. i, 1; Rev. xix, 13). The word of God, expressing his holy, gracious purpose, had often come to the Jewish fathers through the prophets. For themselves, every word of God was inseparable from creative activity: in the natural world, in forms of beauty and of life; in the world of spirits, in personalities after the divine likeness. It was, therefore, a natural development of Christian thought when they came to see in Christ the one who was *par excellence* the Word of God; in him they experienced a truer, more gracious, and, because personal, a more perfect utterance of God. The word of God was then no abstract truth, no bare dogma, but a personal reality, living, life-giving. Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh, perfectly realizing the filial spirit, full of grace and truth, is a new creative centre of redeeming power in the midst of our sinful humanity. As such, he gives himself to be known; while we contemplate the simple story of his earthly life, he quickens within us the impulse and the will to become like him; and in all our endeavors after a worthier interpretation of Christian experience, he ever more deeply and vitally implants himself in our hearts.

By the word of God, therefore, in relation to the Christian life is meant all those revelations of the divine gracious purpose which are contained in the Scriptures, especially in the Gospels, but most of all is meant Jesus Christ, the one whose filial consciousness is the perfect reflection of the heavenly Father, a consciousness which reproduces itself in all those

who follow him, always, however, imperfectly, yet ever according to the same type.

(2) The character of the Christian life has been variously conceived. The Apostolic church thought of it as a "vocation." In the profound depths of consciousness the soul had heard and yielded itself to a secret voice, a gracious invitation, an authoritative summons — a life wherein was disclosed a heavenly good to be received, an earthly task to be fulfilled. The ideal aim of the renewed man is thus obedience to God. It is a divine vocation.

It has also been interpreted as "probation." According to this conception, the present is a state of trial and of preparation for another world. The condition of the soul hereafter is dependent upon the way it meets sufferings, difficulties, and dangers here. In more recent times, the doctrine that probation is limited to the present world has suffered two modifications, one in the interest of those who in the earthly life were either irresponsible or else ignorant of the gospel, who, that is, have not yet had a probation; the other, that the period of probation will continue until all souls have yielded themselves to the love of God.

While for the doctrine that life is a probation appeal may be made to many representations in the Scriptures, — that God puts men into given situations in order to test them, and that, the process of trial complete, he passes judgment on them, — yet the conviction is irresistible that those who advocate this doctrine have given to the substance a meaning which belongs only to the form, or have stopped short at a partial instead of moving forward to a comprehensive

point of view. It is, moreover, to be added that the circle of thought in which this notion arises, especially in its modern aspect, is essentially deistic.

We turn, therefore, to a more satisfactory key to the interpretation of Christian experience, or rather that which includes both vocation and probation. This is "discipline," or God's education of the new life. The earliest name by which the followers of Jesus were known was that of "disciples." This was indeed a favorite designation by which Jesus called those who were associated with him. In his farewell words, he promises that after his departure the Holy Spirit in their common Christian experience shall continue the training which he had only begun.

Christian discipline as ordinarily understood refers to suffering or chastisement to which one is subjected by God for the sake of moral correction and improvement. We must, however, take a broader view of the matter. Life is a school, a sphere of training, a condition for divine education. Its aim is to awaken in the consciousness a Christian interpretation of all that belongs to experience, and then to develop the person in accord with this interpretation. The fundamental rational need is to be set free from illusion — *maya* — in which sin and misery of every kind originate, to penetrate to the reality, to know the truth of things. The deepest emotional need is of a rest whose source is not from without but from within, which draws its content from the Eternal. The supreme ethical need is of a will receptive of God, fashioned after his will, in which the divine life finds its human and ever more perfect expression. Absolute freedom from illusion belongs to omniscience alone; felicity, com-

plete and changeless, has its home nowhere save in the Infinite One ; and only in the life of God are the ideal and the actual, purpose and fulfillment, in unbroken identity.

Yet man, although he has these not, or only in part, makes them the goal of his effort, and according to the measure of his attainment lives. "In your patience, ye shall win your souls (Luke xxi, 19).

The regions within which Christian discipline is carried on are various. There is first the developing person in relation to his own nature. At the opening of this chapter was discussed the opposition between the higher and the lower nature, the higher, the life of the spirit in union with God, the lower, composed of particular impulses and desires acting necessarily and each for itself. It was there seen that not only must the higher nature penetrate the lower and so transmute it, but that for us on earth the higher nature or spirit finds in the lower the material out of which it organizes the concrete personal life, even the most glorious human experience.

A second sphere is that of the person with his Christian aspiration and choice as related to a sinful character, which has indeed been repudiated, but which in its animating principle is by no means wholly dead. Such a condition among Christians is referred to in Colossians iii, 5-11, and often elsewhere in the Epistles of St. Paul. It is possibly the most common fact of the developing consciousness of the new life.

A third sphere of Christian discipline is found in the relation of the person to the outer world — all that constitutes one's environment external to himself. Here two distinct interests of life are presented, one

of which is concerned with the natural world, the other with social relations.

With reference to the world of nature, we are driven on by an inner necessity to ask of every mundane thing, What does it mean? and by the same inner necessity "the whole of our apprehension of the world is one great and prolonged deception."¹ The world is the mightiest of all magicians. From the hour "when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat," even to the last sad disenchantment of a sinner to-day, human life has been one long disillusioning. A Christian interpretation of the world is the inevitable condition of one's entire spiritual use of it, but in the process of interpretation he passes through one illusion only to fall under the power of another. "Canaan first; then the hope of a [conquering] Messiah; then the millennial glory."² This means not that the Christian ideal as to our world is simply an *ignis fatuus*, forever provoking, forever eluding human apprehension, but only that the ideal presents itself in fragmentary aspects, under forms of imaginary construction, according to laws which govern all our perceptions of external reality.

The relation of the Christian man to others seems at first sight to belong to ethics instead of to theology. For ethics deals with the ideal in terms of individual and social self-realization, and it discloses the con-

¹ Lotze, quoted by Ladd, *Outline of Descriptive and Explanatory Psychology*, p. 218.

² Robertson, *Sermons*, Third Series, vi.

ditions under which this end is possible. But ethics without religion is only a torso ; the true nature of the person and of the social organism does not fully appear, and even if it did, the motive-power for its fulfillment would be inadequate. On the other hand, we first know what man is in the light of the Fatherhood of God ; all men originate in him, and in his life lies their highest good. Through the gospel — its redemptive and disciplinary power — this good comes to realization ; men become actually, what they are ideally, sons of God, and the kingdom of God takes its place in human society. The task connected with this aim, although perfectly simple in statement, is one of extreme difficulty in achievement. It is nothing less than complete moral and spiritual identification with all that is good in personal life everywhere. It includes, therefore, a negative and a positive aspect. Negatively, it involves renunciation of all those forms of impulse and desire, of passion and aim, which stand for the realization of an isolated, independent self. At no point of experience is the pressure of Christian discipline more serious. First animals, later men themselves have for so long and to such an extent struggled for successful assertion of a separate self, that every child is born with an impulse stronger in this than in any other direction. And this hereditary instinct is powerfully reinforced by the many social arrangements which have been organized in response to its one-sided demand. The will to live which is fundamental in human, as it is indeed in all animated existence, thus impels straight to a separate, independent possession of the good. The aim of the gospel is not to eradicate but to transform this tendency into one of the mightiest

of the Christian motives. This it does in part by substituting a true for a false idea of the self, and in part by furnishing motives for its attainment. Jesus speaks of such a relation between himself and his followers that neither his life nor their life is real apart from that of the other, and the Apostle Paul knows of Christians as members one of another and of the body of Christ. If, therefore, the true self is the redeemed humanity, the life of all souls in God, then this is an end infinitely worthy of spiritual endeavor, and is to be gained not by renunciation of anything that truly belongs to the Christian person, but by subordinating it to the realization of this divine end. This aim was indeed accepted implicitly at the entrance upon the new life, but from henceforth we are beset with a twofold difficulty. The first is intellectual; we have to learn through actual experience that going out of ourselves to others in love is the only way to the unfolding of a richer life within. We have also to learn the forms in which this new life most naturally realizes itself in union with others. The second difficulty is moral; the will has to be trained. And the proof of the training will appear in three ways: (1) repeated successful refusals to adopt courses of conduct based on the theory that any one "liveth to himself." (2) At the entrance upon each new stage of the Christian path there will be triumphant decisions, even though gained only after frequent sharp conflicts with temptations to the contrary, to identify one's self with others who have likewise been redeemed by the grace of God. (3) This identification, as it advances toward realization, becomes also more unpremeditated, spontaneous, automatic — a fact which shows that they of whom it

is true are becoming at home in the higher and more spiritual forms of Christian attainment.

“Glad souls ! without reproach or blot ;
Who do God’s will and know it not.”¹

A fourth region in which discipline is operative is in the relation of the new life to God. The human race has run through all the stages in the knowledge of God, from the idea of him as identified with the manifold powers of nature to the conception of him as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and the notion of a service acceptable to him has been marked by a corresponding advance, from the expression of ignorant wonder and abject and paralyzing fear to free personal surrender and obedience. The history of humanity in its increasing apprehension of God is in great part recapitulated in the experience of every Christian. To learn by experience the meaning of the Fatherhood of God is the ideal task of the Christian life. Jesus defines the essence of eternal life as the endeavor after a progressive knowledge of God according to his ideal nature, made possible through the historic revelation of his Son (Jno. xvii, 3). This knowledge is no theoretical affair which can be adequately presented in notional propositions, but that spiritual illumination so finely described by the Apostle, — “the eyes of your heart enlightened” (Eph. i, 18), — an illumination which grows and clears itself only in the Christian life. To know God, who alone unifies and completes our fragmentary perceptions of reality, to whom our life is related as that of a partial to a “perfectly organized Experience,” in whom our faith and hope and love have their fulfillment, in

¹ Wordsworth, *Ode to Duty*.

whom is found the ultimate solution of the mystery of evil, the failure of life, and even of the sinful will, — to know him as our Father, in the consciousness of a happy filial response, — this is indeed the aim of all the discipline of this life.

In the above bare outline of the spheres within which Christian discipline is perfected, no adequate expression was or could be given to its infinite complexity, its immeasurable significance, its tragic interest, its temporary defeats, its decisive and glorious conquests, its continuous disillusioning which ever leads to richer visions of reality, its deepening feeling of human brotherhood, its tender disclosures of the divine forgiveness and patience and comfort, and even the inmost heart of God. However open to others the life may be, yet its sources are hidden, and its real experiences known only to God and the responsive soul. And here, in the secret recesses of the spirit, under the transforming power of grace, is the confidence created that “to them that love God, all things work together for good.”

(3) With reference to prayer, men have always believed that the higher powers heard and answered their requests. The conception of the place of petition in the religious life has, however, undergone a remarkable evolution in the experience of the race.

In the Old and New Testaments, prayer represents all those forms of religious life in which men engage as if face to face with God, as adoration, confession of sin, thanksgiving, and supplication. We shall here confine our attention to the last of these, or what is properly called prayer.

In recent times the whole question of prayer has

been subjected to fresh and searching investigation. The doctrine that God answers prayer for objects within the region of physical events has been rendered more hazardous by reason of the modern scientific conception of the uniformity of natural phenomena. Among the many attempts to remove or at least to alleviate this difficulty, three explanations have been confidently appealed to. The first makes use of the doctrine of præestablished harmony. In a cosmic order eternally and immutably predestined, the spiritual and the physical, prayer and its answer are so connected by the divine appointment that both fall out together at the same moment. The second holds that God interferes back of the observed order of nature, in the ultimate antecedents of events. While a third theory is that prayer goes out as an efficient cause to secure its end, operating in a manner so subtle that its pathway can be divined only by faith, and faith alone can discern its result. None of these interpretations is free from the same class of difficulties that beset the question proposed for explanation.

There remains a conception of prayer which has indeed been characterized as that of "reflex influence," but which is entitled to another designation; it is in reality communion with God through the highest act of the human will. According to this view, prayer is not a means of changing the divine will or of forcing some outward good, but an act in which the spirit of man realizes its deep oneness with God.

If we interrogate the Scriptures, we find the supreme revelation on this subject in the three great experiences of Jacob, of Jesus, and of Paul (Gen. xxxii,

24-32; Matt. xxvi, 36-46; 2 Cor. xii, 7-10). To refer only to the prayer of Jesus, we see how in a moral crisis the heart first brings its confused and crushing weight to the heavenly Father and, shrinking from it, begs that it be removed, and then how this tumultuous feeling subsides and its place is taken by a profound consciousness of submission, of happy trust, of resting in God, and of divine strength mightier than temptation, or pain, or the fear of death. This is not, however, properly described as reflex influence, a result brought about simply by the soul itself; it is rather the realization of that for which prayer stands, a consciousness of the ideal union of the soul with God — that God's will is best, and in that will is man's felicity. For if prayer be not merely the expression of our troubled emotions and transient wishes, but much rather that act of devotion in which we become conscious of God as he discloses himself in our inmost being, in which too we realize that elevation of spirit above the world wherein the unrest that springs from the imperfect forms of particular desires gives place to the sweet and blessed peace of the life of God — if this is the true meaning of prayer, then men will pray as long as they have need of communion with the Father of spirits and he has some better thing for them than any earthly gift.

It may perhaps be objected that if this is the true meaning of prayer, — if, that is, one is not sure of obtaining the physical good for which he asks and because he asks, — there is then little encouragement to make known our requests unto God, and life is reduced to a naturalistic basis. On the contrary, (1) a naturalistic theory of life is possible only if there is no God.

(2) To those who believe in God, however, the world and all that is in it is the infinitely varied expression of his loving will. Even if one were to ask for nothing beyond the good which daily comes to him in the providence of God, he would be incalculably richer than if his most extravagant wishes were in some miraculous way fulfilled. (3) A true theory of the Christian life must provide for the freest and fullest expression of every human want, however partial or mistaken, before God. The lower desires are never final; but the Father will hear, even though he does not grant, the agonizing request of his child. This is a stage, nay, a necessary stage, in the enlarging and purifying of human desire.

The common explanation that even when God denies the will expressed in the prayer he yet bestows something better, and that this may be the real answer to prayer, contains indeed a deep truth; but since it is due to an imperfect analysis of the content of desire that goes out in petition, it leads to misconception of the relation of prayer to its answer. In the will of the Christian man voiced in prayer there are two distinct aspects, one of which longs for a partial and therefore individual and transient, the other for a universal, therefore truly personal and permanent good. Naturally, the wish on its first emergence in consciousness fastens upon some particular momentary earthly good, — thus following the order in which all desires come up in experience, — but it is incomplete so long as it is not aware of the universal element involved in it. Within the circle of the praying consciousness these two aspects of desire — both of which so far express the will of the petitioner — are felt to be antagonistic

and irreconcilable. Both cannot triumph. The conflict set up must issue in the subsidence of one or other form of the desire in question. On the one hand, the cup which one begs that God will remove represents the earliest and, therefore, incomplete aspect of the desire ; on the other hand, the " thy will not mine be done " expresses the desire as it is perfected in consciousness. In prayer, then, the will swings from the lower — the physical, the individual, the human — to the higher — the spiritual, the universal, the divine aspect and aim.

It is not to be claimed that prayer is denied when a lower wish remains unfulfilled, for the lower wish has freely passed away, giving place to the higher ; nor can it be asserted that in such an event one does not have his will, for it is only then that his will is truly fulfilled, whether in the case of Jesus or in that of his followers. Yet one would have the lower wish, if he might, and this wish appears in his prayer ; but this being impossible if he would live " the life of God," the higher wish prevails, and in God's will his will is done.

It is therefore evident that prayer and the laws which govern it do not belong to an isolated segment of human experience, but form an integral part of the conditions under which Christian personality is realized. Here, as in every other region of the life of the spirit, death is the pathway to life, renunciation the secret of receiving. The cry of the Psalmist voices the final longing, the ineffable satisfaction, of him in whom the power of prayer is perfected : " Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee " (Ps. xxiii, 25).

There is also a social aspect of prayer. As far back as religious knowledge extends, intercession has been an unbroken custom of the race. Of this spirit, Jesus' prayer in the Upper Chamber is the most significant instance. He asked that there might be unity between himself and his disciples like that subsisting between himself and the Father; that the joy which his ministry had brought to him might be likewise completely realized in them; that they might be kept not indeed from the world, but only from its evil; that they might become holy through their absolute devotion to the truth of God; that they and those who were to accept him through their word might be so united in spirit that the world should be convinced that he was sent of the Father; and finally, that in the world to come they might not be separated from him, but be sharers of his divine glory. Here, then, we reach the solid ground out of which all prayer for others must forever spring. There is first the solidarity of human interests; secondly, the sympathy to which all human need makes its perpetual appeal, whose undertone and inspiration is the ultimate unity of all in God; thirdly, the assurance that earthly solicitude for others is but the finite and fragmentary expression of the all-embracing, sleepless, infinitely tender solicitude of God for every living thing, especially for that which is to become like himself; finally, if all souls live in God and he is indeed the Life of their life, then the prayer breathed out to him for others cannot fail of its response in the divine will, or its answer in the heart of those prayed for. The cry of the departing soul is not only the truest poetry but the soundest faith: —

■ Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. . . .

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For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.”¹

¹ *The Passing of Arthur.*

X

THE FUTURE

FROM the writings of the New Testament no doctrine can be deduced which will embody and unite all the divergent details of the presentations there found.

(1) We are here in the region of prophecy, which is marked by two distinct qualities — outward form, often apocalyptic, and inner truth. Thus we are dealing not with history written before the event, but with the principle and outcome of the divine redemptive agency, as it comes into relation with the human spirit, presented for the most part under images strange to us, but familiar to the Jewish people.

(2) The Apostolic age was one of enthusiasm. The most astounding possibilities might at any moment become actual. Single days counted as years, and a generation meant more than many a later century. The force that had arrested and transformed the lives of these men was equal to the mighty, almost instantaneous transformation of the whole world. Thus in part they projected their own experience upon the arena of society in order to find there what they had already felt within themselves; but in part so magnificent was their expectation in comparison with their actual experience, and so eager was their longing for its immediate realization, that only in a divine power, suddenly and miraculously put forth, could they find the secret of the consummation of which they dreamed.

(3) It was a time also of quick and immeasurable transitions. The passage from the legal to the spiritual side of their ancient religion was fraught with grave dangers, some of which could not fail to be realized; portions of the older forms still remained to obscure the perfect spirituality of the new; just proportions of truth were disturbed; a true perspective was not yet possible; time alone would test and mature their amazing hopes.

(4) Their teaching on this whole subject of the future was not theological but religious, and, therefore, addressed to faith. It was the product not so much of the reflective consciousness in which the various elements are reasoned out and harmonized both with one another and with all reality, as of the simple faith which is mightier than all that is in the world, which clothes itself in many-colored imaginative dress, not fully emancipated from the forms in which Jewish national expectation conceived of the future.

(5) It is, perhaps, not possible for us, from the documents of the New Testament, to discern just how far the teaching of Jesus has been overlaid by the beliefs of a later development, even if we could accurately separate the enduring truth of his words from the figurative or mistaken notions of Jewish apocalyptic hope. And we cannot reduce all the elements of the New Testament presentation to a consistent unity; it is sufficient here to refer to the change in Paul's expectation concerning the Second Coming of Christ. We are, therefore, concerned not merely to ascertain and classify, nor even to harmonize the Biblical hopes, but rather to seek for the idea which, in however diverse expression, gives energy to the state-

ments of the New Testament on this subject, to disengage the permanent from the transient elements in it, and thus to disclose its inner consistency with the principles of the gospel, its congruity with the history of the church, and its agreement with Christian experience.

(6) We shall gain the right point of view for considering the other world in the light of the Christian hope only when we do not set it off in a region apart, governed by laws of divine action peculiar to itself, but rather conceive of it as a continuation of that universal and eternal divine order with which the conditions of our earthly life have made us acquainted. Here and now, on the limited stage of the earthly life, is a revelation of that moral order which is as wide and enduring as the moral consciousness. Other principles may indeed emerge in God's future dealing with men which would be strange to us in our earthly experience, but these can be only a further unfolding of existing relations between God and man. The method of evolution which characterizes creation and providence in all the stages of redemptive activity here below is likewise the method of the Christian hope. Eschatology is therefore the doctrine not of "a transcendental condition, separated from the course of the present life and confined to the sphere of the hereafter," but of the progressive realization of human destiny, partly on earth, and partly in the unseen world, according to those principles by which God is revealed as governing himself in his relations with men. In this chapter, then, we carry to a further stage the discussion already entered upon concerning what is involved in God's gracious dealing with men.

The chief topics to be considered are the Second Coming of Christ, the Resurrection, and the Judgment.

I. The Second Coming is to be conceived of as the ethical ideal of the relation of the living Christ to men. If we bring together the several features of the New Testament presentation on this subject, and interpret them in the light of experience, we have to regard this coming of Christ as the manifestation of his presence and glory throughout this dispensation for the redemption of men, the establishment of the Messianic kingdom, and thus the increasing and final overthrow of all that is hostile to the will of God. According to its nature and purpose, the exaltation of Christ must proceed to an ever more complete embodiment of itself in human society, until a finality is reached.

This is a historical process, and it has a consummation. For the Apostles, indeed, there was no history, in the strict sense of that term. There is material for history, but this material was joined on to the Jewish religious ideas of human society, as on its redemptive side a supernatural work of God, to which no effective opposition on man's part could be offered. Since the life of man was not till long afterward conceived of as a human historical process to be realized under definite conditions of development, it is not strange that they took their point of view from God rather than from men. With prophetic insight they beheld the principle both of the ideal and of the process of God's redemptive activity; they also recognized in God the source of the mighty energy by which the consummation so devoutly longed for was to be attained.

The history of the church, however, has compelled two corrections of even the most mature Apostolic expect-

tations. First, the process of realizing the kingdom of God is far more lengthened than any of their expressions would lead us to suppose. They remembered words of Jesus in which he spoke of his speedy return; they felt the mighty power of his indwelling Spirit; under the inspiration of his glorious promises every obstacle seemed to fade away: "yet a very little while, he that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry" (Heb. x, 37). All those splendid hopes, by which they had been lifted out of the degradation of the Gentiles and the limitations of the Jewish faith, might, even in the lifetime of some of them, be consummated. So they thought.

Secondly, the realization of this ideal was to be effected by an apocalypse — a sudden, supernatural manifestation of the visible, glorified Redeemer. In this sudden manifestation, the history of the church and of the world was to end, every individual life was to find its completion, and all spiritual processes were to leap to their instantaneous, miraculous consummation. This apocalyptic notion of the introduction and termination of epochs, this miraculous realization of the religious ideal, seems to be very congenial to the human mind. We find it dominating much of the Jewish thought before Christ, and reappearing in various forms through all the experience of the church since that day, even unto the present hour.

Experience, however, requires the substitution of another law of progress. The working out of the Christian ideal has not been and, we may add, is not to be of brief duration, nor is it to be brought to an end by any miraculous hastening or transformation of spiritual forces. And, indeed, in the later teaching

of the Apostle Paul there sounds this deeper and truer note ; for he himself sets tasks and opens vistas of growth and service and attainment which demand nothing less than another life for their realization. Slowly, then, with more or less of fluctuation, but on the whole always increasing both in extent and in intensity, the kingdom of God permeates human life and the institutions of men, and it must so continue until the whole is leavened.

This advance is made in part gradually, and in part through crises to its goal. There are times of slow and steady maturing of previously initiated conditions, together with a gradual preparation for new and higher developments of social order. Again, there are single years in the centuries when ideas and personalities burst forth suddenly, which are destined to revolutionize the most ancient of human customs. In such epochs, it is as if the sun were darkened, and the moon withheld her light, and the stars fell from heaven, and the powers of the heavens were shaken. All this is, however, only the "sign of the Son of man in heaven." And now

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new." ¹

But whether nations are born in a day, or, silently and without observation, redemptive forces permeate the natural life of man to organize it according to the divine type, in either case there is the coming of the Christ.

The advance of the redeemed society is to issue in a consummation. Christianity knows of no two ultimate principles of being, one good, the other evil, both

¹ *Morte d'Arthur.*

eternal, each unconquerable over against the other. Into the light of the ethical absoluteness of God the traditional belief of the church sets both Satan and evil spirits, but neither was from the beginning bad, nor is capable of everlasting effective opposition to the good. Jesus "beheld Satan as lightning falling from heaven." Here was gathered up in a prophetic vision, and concentrated into a moment of time, the victorious outcome of the long struggle of evil with good. The supreme symbol of the moral universe is a cross upon a hill, showing clear against a black sky, at whose foot are met the opposing forces of love and hate; but the darkness passes, giving place to the bright and peaceful day, and he who lately hung upon the cross, a victim of misunderstanding and malicious will, enters another sphere, whence he carries forward to its consummation the conquest of evil by the power of his deathless love. Those who hate may indeed "kill the body, but after that have no more that they can do" (Luke xii, 4). Yet already, in the love which even the fury of his enemies only fanned into brighter flame, triumphant in death, is beheld the prophecy which Pentecost begins to fulfill — the ultimate overthrow of every evil power (cf. 1 Cor. xv, 24-28).

The reason also with unmistakable demand points to a consummation in which the age-long antagonism of good and evil issues in a progressive disclosure of the inner nature of each, in the sifting and rejection of irreconcilable elements, and in the final subjection of every hostile dominion under the power of Jesus Christ. In the doctrine of Antichrist or "man of Sin," with which the "Abomination of desolation"

and the "false Christs" of the Gospels and the "beast" of the Revelation are to be connected, we have a profound truth concerning the relation of evil to the redemptive purpose as it lay in the minds of the early church, but one which needs to be extricated from the particular forms in which it is found. We shall gain the reality we seek when we discern under the various figures named above an expression of the irrepressible conflict of good and evil, which to many of the ancients seemed to be a part of the very constitution of the world. It appears in the Babylonian creation story in the struggle of Light with Tiamat or Chaos; we come upon it in several phases of Greek and Hindu religious philosophy, in later Jewish thought in the doctrine of Satan, in the organized opposition to the Jewish leaders under the Maccabees, and in the fierce persecutions which swept over the Christian church during its first centuries. It is thus seen to be part of that wider problem which it is the task of religion to solve — the ultimate supremacy of the good originating in a divine will which has both the disposition and the power to make its purpose finally effective against the utmost malignity and resistance. In this respect the instinct of the church has been right. Evil must run to its limit, and wickedness not stop short of its extreme self-assertion; only then will the divine triumph be complete when it has met and vanquished the last and mightiest expression of hostile forces.

Faith rests in the hope of such a consummation. "To suppose that this moral order . . . with its unsolved discrepancy between the ideal and the actual, with its restless alternation of progress and declension, of rise and fall, heaving like the billows of the ocean,

shall flow on and on forever through a purposeless eternity, would involve a denial of the final triumph of goodness and truth.”¹ Thus we hold that the Second Coming of Christ is continuous and progressive, the power of God through which the consummation of the redemptive purpose is reached.

II. The Christian doctrine of the Resurrection is at heart the ethical ideal of the completion of life. The term, “resurrection,” originally implied that the person had passed to an underworld, whence at some remote time he might come forth to enter once more upon the uninterrupted communion with God which had been arrested by death. It thus signified a rising again, a standing up once more of those who had for a time fallen, a resumption under happier conditions of privileges of which the person had been deprived. The essential thing was that for those who experienced it, the interruption of all that made life worth the living was to be followed at a longer or shorter period by recovery of the good temporarily parted with. We, on the other hand, conceive of no such break in the unfolding of consciousness. To us, life is continuous, and self-realization the goal toward which consciousness unceasingly strives. If we still designate the attainment of this ideal by the term, “resurrection,” we do so because the word has remained the constant symbol of this divine hope in all the changing phases through which it has passed in its historic development. By resurrection we mean the increasing realization of the Christian hope of life, especially after death, issuing in the perfection of all those who are the subjects of it. Accordingly, it is not an event,

¹ Martensen, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 465.

momentary, miraculous, but a process, continuous, ever more significant, resulting at length in the consummation of all the spiritual longings of men in union with God.

The instant the mind is set free from the magical, apocalyptic form of presenting the idea of the resurrection, no other alternative remains but to see it in the light of a perpetual activity of the Spirit of God, by which the personality, progressively delivered from the last traces of earthly infirmity, is brought to indissoluble perfection. Since the social ideal can be realized only by the attainment of it in particular individuals, personal eternal life is an object of legitimate Christian hope. In the Scriptures the ethical and spiritual elevation of personal character is represented as a preparatory stage of the glory to which the blessed are to be exalted. And what is affirmed of the individual must be true of the society of the redeemed. The resurrection is to a "city of God."

The notion of the resurrection originated in two great human interests, which may be regarded as parallel, one of which has reference to God, the other to man.

(1) The development of the idea of God. According to the primitive notion of Israel, their God, like the tribal divinities of their neighbors, was restricted in his activities to the welfare of his own people. But gradually, as his sway was extended to include ever wider groups of nations, it came to penetrate even to the world of the dead. The first indication of this extension was seen in the fact that the souls of the dead might be brought back from Sheol by prophetic agency. At length, however, the idea of God reached

the culmination of its development. God was conceived of as Creator—a purely ethical relation, indeed—and, therefore, as the absolute Ruler of the entire world, the omnipotent Disposer of all events; then of necessity the eternal ultimate Ground of all existence. Nothing lay beyond his jurisdiction; even the dead were still within his domain. He who had once brought man into existence, and revealed to him his purpose of grace, would not leave him as if forgotten in the underworld, but would finally restore him to a life of blessedness hereafter, and even in the period of waiting would not desert him. If the nation overthrown would rise from its utmost defeat to a more than Davidic splendor, it would follow that the individual swept away by death would again by the same almighty Power attain to a life more satisfying than that of earth. In addition to this, the underworld was itself conceived of as a region of intense moral activity; at death the person might be transferred to a condition not unlike that of Paradise, whence through resurrection he was to pass into final and consummate bliss. Thus the doctrine of the Resurrection depended upon the development of the idea of God.

(2) The other line of advance was in the idea of man. First, the soul was conceived of as an unceasing energy. Its rational activity was subject to no interruption. The capacity of thought awakened in the earthly existence must unfold to ever wider intelligence. Death, therefore, ushered the person into a new form of conscious life. Secondly, not only must accountability for past deeds be affirmed, — an eternal answerableness for all human actions, — but responsibility for any present moment as well. Ethical relations

continue on in full force. Retribution and reward, so often withheld here, are only postponed to the world beyond death. There also new virtues and new sins may arise. A change from evil to good is also possible. Thirdly, death has no power to destroy the ideal. That for which the earthly spirit had longed and striven was no empty dream, the vision of its hope no mirage; but those who here had been in communion with God, in another state, in fellowship with kindred spirits, shall attain to perfect communion with him (Is. xxvi, 19). Fourthly, the very nature, the essential dignity, of man on earth forces the conviction that in the world of the dead he who has been of such worth here cannot drop below the position already gained. The Psalmist, who conceived of humanity as belonging to a totally different order of being from that of God, exclaimed, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" We, on the other hand, have room in our consciousness for no such expression of surprise; it is just because man is what he is,—he belongs to the divine type of life,—that he is the subject of divine consideration. God would be less than God if it were possible for him to ignore that creature who is "likeliest" himself. Relations of such dignity between man and God must survive death, and issue in the final and perfect glorification of man.

Thus we see that the development of the idea of God and of man brought about belief in the resurrection.

In the Apostolic church, belief in the resurrection moved almost wholly in the circle of religious ideas, as is evident from two facts: it was to be accomplished

by a divine deed, and it was to issue in communion with God. At any moment, unheralded and unprepared for, the trump might sound, the dead be raised, the living be transformed, and the life of heaven be begun. And as for the form in which the life was to be clothed, "God giveth it a body even as it pleased him." And yet from what we have discovered to be the moving principles which originated the belief in the resurrection, we are not surprised to find suggestions which, followed out, conduct to a more adequate idea. Two of these which centre in the ethical aspect of the resurrection are of special importance. One has to do primarily with the case of Jesus Christ. Peter, speaking of him in relation to death, in a moment of inspired insight, declared that "it was not possible that he should be holden of it." He indeed referred the resurrection of Christ to the immediate power of God, and to the fulfillment of the prophetic word, on the ground that every word of prophecy stands sure, but even so, attention was directed to the essential nature of a life wholly responsive to God; in such a person, death, though seemingly a complete overthrow, was in reality the inevitable way to the highest life. And the verdict of reason coincides with the judgment of faith: it was not possible that he should be holden of death. For him, life continued unbroken by outward change; or rather the outward change, however complete in death, was only a necessary means whereby the real life was set free to enter at once upon a fuller stage of its utmost self-realization. If, therefore, Christ was, as we have maintained, the "Son of man," who perfectly realized all that belongs to the nature of man, himself the type after which all human per-

sonality is to be organized, then so far as men share the life of Christ by identification with him, they stand, even as he stood, in relation to death — it is not possible for them to be holden of it (cf. 1 Cor. xv, 22). In the life of the resurrection they shall be as he is: They too are made “after the power of an indissoluble life.” Only in this relation is the meaning of Jesus’ address to Martha clear: “I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.”

The other point referred to is found in the nature of the religious consciousness. Concerning this, the New Testament contains two passages of the greatest significance: the first, in the reply of Jesus to the Sadducees (Luke xx, 35; cf. xiv, 14), the second, in Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians (iii, 11). Jesus, in his reply to the Sadducees, speaks of those who are “accounted worthy to attain to . . . the resurrection from the dead,” and Paul expresses his eager longing, his unresting endeavor, to “attain unto the resurrection from the dead.” How far the language attributed to Jesus in Luke may have been affected from a Pauline source, we may not exactly determine, but in both Luke and Paul the same ethical import is assigned to the resurrection. A similar teaching is found in the last chapter of the Gospel of Luke (xxiv, 26, 46), and in the Epistle to the Philippians (ii, 8, 9; cf. also Jno. xii, 23–26). Here the resurrection and exaltation of the Christ are indissolubly connected with experience of suffering. In part the life of the body is laid down in order that the life of the spirit may emerge (Jno. x, 18), and in part the true life of

the spirit is realized through suffering (Jno. xii, 27). The Apostle declares also that in this principle is found the secret of his ethical striving; he would know Christ, particularly the power of his resurrection,—a knowledge to be gained through sharing the suffering of his Lord,—so as to be identified with him in the principle of his death; thus perchance he may attain unto the resurrection from the dead. Not that this coveted goal was already reached, or indeed could be reached by him simply as he was, but with the utmost energy of self-devotion he was pressing on towards it as the end of all his endeavor.

It is, therefore, evident that if the resurrection is ultimately referred to the will of God, yet it does not take place apart from the will of man. Here we come upon the biological law, that function determines organism, not only as to its structure, but as to its very existence. In the last analysis, all life is essentially ethical; it is a struggle for existence through the realization of an ideal end. In the degree to which the organism strives after its ideal end, it realizes itself, that is, it attains to a permanent life. If for any reason it repudiates a portion of the end which in the long process of evolution has been won for it as its ideal destination, then it tends to fall back again down to that point in the series of existence where it no more requires or uses the good which it denies. Jesus refers to this law in the word that "unto every one that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away." Whether there is something in the original endowment of each individual which precludes the possibility of a complete loss of the organizing principle of his

personality, and thus of his very consciousness, we have at present no means of ascertaining. If analogies were valid, drawn from the lower orders of being, such fatal contingency would seem to be open. And psychology may yet show the possibility that some one of the powers which are unified in consciousness may through disuse become incapable of reaction to stimulus, and hence practically extinct.

Leaving this negative consideration of the case at one side, we have to hold that the resurrection is indeed dependent upon the will of God, but is realized only by the ethical and spiritual endeavor of man.

The other aspect of belief in the resurrection as held by men in the New Testament, which shows that this was for the most part confined to the circle of religious ideas, was that for these men the entire meaning of life in heaven, all its interests and aims, its relations and its fulfillment, were swallowed up in God. Not that everything else was denied either worth or existence — such a question did not present itself; it was enough that God or Christ filled the horizon of their hope. At an earlier time very different expectations had prevailed: resuscitation to a happy life in the kingdom of God, thought of now as of eternal, now as of temporal duration on the earth; now as of everlasting duration in a new heaven and a new earth arising from the existing heaven and earth transformed, now as an invisible future world where the will of God was to be perfectly realized. The more physical of these expectations, shattered by the Exile and utterly destroyed by the political misfortunes of the Jewish people since that time, were gradually changed, until in the Apostolic age they became a truly spir-

itual hope. The earth and all its glory was to pass away, and a new world take its place. And they comforted themselves with those words which have ever since been a solace to mourners, and to the dying the very bread of life: "I will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "To depart and be with Christ . . . is very far better." "So shall we ever be with the Lord." "God . . . all in all."

This spiritual hope, thus restricted to the enjoyment of God, has since reappeared under several forms. It was, for instance, the consummation for which the Neo-Platonist Plotinus longed as the end of all his philosophic contemplation — to sink and lose the human consciousness in the still depths of the Infinite One and All. And the Christian mystic, whether mediæval monk like Bernard of Clairvaux, or Puritan preacher like Jonathan Edwards, has dreamed and prayed and striven for the vision of God as the final and exclusive satisfaction of all his heart's desires.

We must, however, in part transform and in part add to this way of conceiving of the matter. Not the absorption but the realization of personality is the divine ideal for man. And that alone can be heaven where no essential relation is ignored which belongs to man as made in God's image, but where every capacity attains free and perfect fulfillment.

Concerning the nature of "the body that shall be," our language must be mainly the language of faith, and the content of our expectation that which appeals to faith. Here, where the veil perfectly hides the beyond and death presents itself as the last, the deepest mystery of mortal existence, we have, first, to take refuge

in the love of God, that he will not suffer his work to perish — “them also which are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him ;” and, secondly, to comfort ourselves with the words of the Apostle in view of death : “longing to be clothed upon with our habitation which is from heaven : if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.” What that “habitation” will be, we cannot at present know. Analogies relied upon with confidence will certainly fail, if they are drawn from the sphere of the physical. Thus we are thrown back upon faith ; and faith is directed to the “that,” not to the “how” — to the fact of the future perfection and revelation of glory, not to the method of the consummation.

A question arises concerning the attitude of the New Testament toward the resurrection of the wicked. Such teaching appears to be unequivocally present in only three passages (Jno. v, 28, 29 ; Acts xxiv, 15 ; Rev. xx, 13). The words attributed to Jesus in John are so unlike all the teachings bearing on this subject in this Gospel — and indeed in the Synoptics — that one is compelled to raise a query whether they correctly report him. Elsewhere he knows of a resurrection only as a vital spiritual process essentially connected with faith in himself ; indeed, he identifies the resurrection with eternal life, or with obedience to the will of God. And it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile the resurrection conceived of as an ethical process with the notion of it regarded as an act of God, by which the individual, irrespective of his ethical character, is to be brought to the judgment of condemnation. The two notions move in regions which have nothing in common. A similar verdict

would seem to be required in the case of the language attributed to the Apostle Paul by the author of the Acts. Nowhere in his own writings does such a belief appear, not even in 1 Cor. xv, 22, nor in 2 Cor. v, 10 (cf. Luke xx, 38). It is to be supposed, therefore, either that the common Pharisaic view is attributed to him, or that he has for the moment given expression to a phase of the resurrection which cannot be drawn into accord with his deeper Christian hope. Moreover, the fact that in the conception of the Apostle judgment is preceded by the resurrection is nothing to the point here, since the Jews certainly conceived of a judgment of wicked beings without a resurrection. The chapter in the Revelation in which death and Hades are represented as giving up their dead, so that every man shall be judged according to his works, stands for a purely Jewish conception and is to be referred to a Jewish source, in common with many other fragments of the same book which cannot be assimilated to the Christian idea.

These considerations, however, do not fully settle the question. In the first place, the New Testament writers know of only two classes of men — those who were in Christ and those who were out of Christ. Secondly, the practical interest of these writers was bound up with those who were in Christ, and to such persons all their writings were addressed. Thirdly, it was natural that their attention should be engrossed with the ethical rather than with the metaphysical or the speculative aspect of the case. Fourthly, it would not be strange if here and there in their allusions to the resurrection, as in their presentation of the Second Coming, there appeared survivals of an earlier belief which

they had inherited from common Jewish tradition, not yet transformed by the ruling spirit of the gospel. We, on the other hand, cannot divide men into two wholly distinct and separate classes—the perfectly good and the perfectly bad. Our experience shows that every human character is mixed, and that there is no one in whom some ethical endeavor is not present. In men, therefore, who have not consciously yielded themselves to Christ, there is good striving to assert itself in opposition to the evil; and in the measure to which such ethical endeavor is present the person is prevented from falling down through the ascending scale of being into nonentity. There can be no human life, and, it may be added, no permanent life of any kind, in which such striving is wholly absent. For life is life only so far as it realizes an ideal end; consciously or unconsciously its shaping power is active in every personal being; indeed, apart from this, personality is impossible in any degree. Accordingly, so far as any individual existence rises above the lower animal endowment, in a word, realizes its ideal, it shares the resurrection life.

III. How shall we conceive of the Judgment or the ideal outcome of moral retribution? According to our method of presenting the two other subjects—the Second Coming and the Resurrection—this must be regarded as both a process and a result. As a process, it is the continuous activity of God as it goes forth from Christ and the gospel to the individual and society, by which all that is alien to the will of God is revealed, condemned, and separated from the good, by which the good becomes progressively triumphant until the consummation; as a result, it is the condi-

tion into which the completion of the process of sifting introduces the individual or social life.

The common doctrine is that the judgment is to occur at some time in the distant future, and will be simultaneous for all, in which, too, the issues of human life are to be once for all adjusted. This theory contains two very simple propositions: first, that all men are subject to the divine moral government; secondly, that there are throughout the whole of the present life unadjusted rewards and penalties which await a future adjudication; and the inference is drawn that there must be a future judgment, in which the government of God will be vindicated, all human wrongs righted, and all suffering good rewarded.

On several accounts, however, this theory is defective. (1) It stops at the literal form instead of penetrating to the essential content of the Scriptural idea. (2) The Scriptures do not present the earthly life simply as a probation on which is suspended the eternal destiny of the soul. (3) The doctrine of God leaves room for no such belief. God is immanent in all personal life, whether in this or in the other world. He is not active at one period with law, at another with grace, at still another with penalty; at one moment with mercy, at another with justice; here with compassion, there with anger. On the contrary, as the character of God is one, so is his action one. In his dealing with men there is no holding in abeyance, no suspension of any attribute of his being. The judgment is, therefore, no more truly future than it is present. So far as God is the author of it, it is as constant and perpetual as his action in human life. (4) To postpone the judgment to a future public hour

is to misconceive of justice, as if it were dormant or suspended, wholly bound up with outward conditions. On the contrary, the sphere of justice must be sought not first without but within, in the inner life, in the world of consciousness. Here, in this ethical universe, justice is as wide and deep, as pervasive and essential, as the personality itself; and here, too, it is never arrested, never delayed, never partial, in the sense that something is lacking which at any moment belongs to it.

There are, however, two principles of profound import, in which is found much of the truth in discussions on this subject. One of these is that in experience justice is cumulative. It has always been felt that the whole power of justice was not exhausted in any instant of the earthly life, that neither righteousness nor sin received its full reward or penalty here below, and that unless there is a future in which retribution is to be ideally realized, the ethical meaning of this life at least is inexplicable. But this conviction needs interpretation. Justice would give place to injustice if on any single act, isolated from all succeeding acts, God were to visit eternal retribution. On the other hand, for the evil-doer, even after whatever of suffering his wrong has brought him, there is rightly the feeling that he has not expiated to the full his deed—an entail of evil is fastened upon him, and he is not surprised when confronted with other and more serious consequences. There is for him “a certain fearful expectation of judgment.” The real justification of this feeling is that at the heart of every sinful act is a possibility, an energy, a momentum of action, which is by no means exhausted in the deed itself, but will

become the fruitful mother of a still more evil brood. Thus the evil deed gives rise to a kind of life which goes on ever renewing itself, gathering strength, deepening the channels of action, involving the person in more complicated moral conditions, and drawing after itself, in the character and in social relations, a series of consequences by which, so far as unrestrained, its nature becomes always more fixed, more influential, and more evident. The judgment, then, is not a sudden, unexpected moment in which swift, supernatural, irrevocable doom overtakes the soul, but rather the process in which the redemptive history of the race moves on to its inevitable consummation — the final solution of the inner contradiction, on the one hand, between sinful man and his Saviour, and, on the other hand, between sin and righteousness.

The other principle referred to is that justice tends to externalize itself, and to complete itself in some palpable form. The judgment, as commonly conceived of, is a vast tribunal at which all mankind are gathered, the throne is set, the books opened, the secrets of all hearts made known, and a final verdict pronounced, from which the good and the bad go away each to his own place. The essential features are publicity, visibility, and the social nature of the moral outcome of life. The principle thus laid bare is one of profound significance; it is that every idea in process of realization tends to an ever more adequate embodiment. A character apart from some form of incarnation is inconceivable. There is a deep truth in the instinct of the great dramatists, that ideally nature and man are at one, that nature answers to man's consciousness as the body answers to the soul, the

finest dramatic expression of which is perhaps in the account in the Gospels, that while Jesus was passing through his agony on the cross, darkness was over all the land, and that after he, with a loud cry, had yielded up his spirit, the veil of the temple was torn apart, the earth quaked, rocks were rent, tombs opened, and many bodies of the saints came forth. This principle appears again in Romans viii, 18-25; the creation, the age-long unwilling servant of man's sin, unable of itself to work out the will of God, groans in this sad bondage, and strives in vain to bring forth the ideal good. But at the heart of all throbs a divine hope. Nature and even the body are destined to share in the "liberty of the glory of the sons of God." The Apostle conceives of a solidarity in which man and nature form a unity, and the physical world becomes a symbol of the spirit.

"For of the soul the body form doth take,
For soul is form and doth the body make."¹

We ourselves see how man as he develops determines his own environment. The idea makes a progressive disclosure of itself in the will, and the will organizes not only the character, but even the outer world into aspects that embody its ruling aim. There is thus an inner necessity that the real nature of man shall come to objective manifestation, both in his environment and in his social relations. "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known." How often the features are transfigured and glorified by the indwelling spirit! How often one's home, companions, books, business, pleasures, have become the organized expres-

¹ Spenser, *Hymn in Honour of Beauty*.

sion of the character! And as life goes on in another world, if not perfectly in this, there will be at last for every person permanent adjustment between the inner and the outer, and the outer will be a revelation of the inner. The ancient Hebrew who looked for this correspondence to be completed in the earthly existence was mistaken only in the form, not in the essence of his hope. The judgment is, accordingly, the process in which the spirit realizes itself in and through an outward form, so that this ultimately embodies and reveals the spirit.

As to the nature of penalty in another life, we can naturally form an idea of it only as it shall appear in a moral order which is the continuation of that with which we have been made familiar in this life. In our experience one principle holds good of both reward and penalty — the law of cause and effect. We are to think of no positive infliction which might just as well have taken some other form. No flaming ministers come forth to give it effect. There is required no special act of God. There is no deviation from the universal moral order. Its basis is

“The unwritten laws of God that know no change.
They are not of to-day nor yesterday,
But live forever.”¹

Within the constitution of the world, in the necessary relations of personal beings, in the capacities and powers of the human soul, and most of all in the relation of man to God, is found the nature, the form, the purpose, and the inevitableness of penalty.

Than this no other principle of penalty in the other life is conceivable. He

¹ Sophocles, *Antigone*.

“Who maketh winds his messengers,
Flames of fire his ministers,”

thus using the elemental forces of the world for the working out of his purpose, requires no special instruments for punishing the evil-doer. Moment by moment such a one is kindling his own fire; the more he wastes his substance, the deeper his want; while he who is unheeding of God comes at last to have a mind that is reprobate.

Penalty is often conceived of in terms of suffering. The origin of the notion may be traced to practices and beliefs of an earlier time. In the first place, civil punishments were adjusted to produce suffering, the degree of which was the measure of the punishment inflicted. Secondly, through a violent death, of which suffering was a characteristic mark, the divine anger brought the career of the wicked to an untimely end. Thirdly, in experience, the consciousness of guilt once thoroughly kindled pours its scorching flame into every secret, shrinking recess of the conscience, until the soul, able no longer to bear its withering anguish, sinks down into agonizing despair. Finally, the New Testament pictures of the judgment are deeply colored by suffering, either from the instruments of that judgment, such as fire and brimstone, “wine-press of wrath,” and “tormentors,” or from the condition of those who are punished, the most adequate expression of which is given in Romans ii, 8, 9: extreme divine indignation presses into the heart of the wicked and there causes unspeakable misery.

Suffering cannot be regarded, however, as the only, or indeed as the adequate symbol of penalty. For, as we are told in the New Testament, retribution is

realized in other and not less awful forms ; there are those who are "past feeling," "branded in their own consciousness as with a hot iron." In the condition in which human life is passed one may gradually sink into a degree of moral stupor from which, if the same conditions continue, he may not rouse himself ; he may become insensible to the concrete forms of good — to God and to Jesus Christ, to social relations, to his family, and to all the worthier aims of his own existence ; not that he cannot be, but that he is not, wakened from his moral lethargy, and should conditions remain unchanged, he may never feel either remorse or regret.

But, on the other hand, provided any degree of personality endures, it must always be possible for the feeling of remorse, slumbering long or seemingly dead, to waken into fierce and uncontrollable energy. This is witnessed to both by the Scriptures and by experience. The period during which apathy continues here on earth, compared with the limitless future, is short indeed ; but in a matter like this the essential thing is not so much time as consciousness. Given conscience, memory, and change, and the way is open for the possibility of eternal remorse. The conscience, that capacity in which the immanent God discloses the inviolable authority of the moral ideal, is a constituent part of the personality. If there be such a one to whom moral relations have lost their value, it must be because he has become dehumanized ; but this process can never result in the extinction of the moral sense, as long as any vestige of the personality remains. The memory, that most mysterious of all human powers, may always call up out of the dead and distant past an

act long since forgotten, with an even more vivid sense of its reality and a more poignant grief or a keener remorse than when the act itself was done. In the most unexpected moment, as Ahab is confronted by Elijah, or Herod by Jesus, the past evil deed suddenly incarnates itself before the conscience and points its rebuking finger backward to scenes that will not "down." So long as one goes on undisturbed by outward change, the passing years may only envelop him in a hopeless moral monotony; but let new conditions arise, and no one can predict at what point or to what depth the spirit will be touched, the memory quickened, the past live again, and the conscience be held in the grip of violent remorse. And all this must be carried over to another world. There, as here, conscience, memory, and change are the three conditions in which the consciousness of punishment may be forever realized.

The purpose of punishment is both preventive and retributive. As preventive, it may be reformatory or deterrent. The aim of punishment as reformatory is to bring about in the transgressor a right view of his conduct and thus a change of will. He had supposed, first, that he could gain his end without regard to social relations, and, secondly, that he could escape the social ill effects of his wrong-doing. But reformation is impossible so long as he holds to either of these delusions. So far, therefore, as crime is due to ignorance, and punishment leads to a correction of the misapprehension in which sin originates, this latter may be said to be an aim of punishment. Just as the whipped horse avoids future ill-behavior, and the burnt child dreads the fire, so the evil-doer, taught by

the suffering experienced, will not repeat his misdeed. As deterrent, punishment has reference to those who would be tempted to evil-doing, but who, by reason of the penalty which has overtaken a fellow-criminal, are hindered from following in his steps. This is unquestionably one of the aims which society presents to itself in the administration of justice, which is also more or less effective in the mind of evil-doers. Punishment is, moreover, the return upon the criminal's head of his own wrong acts ; he receives back from others what he has given to them. Several ideas may be associated with this : at the heart of the retribution may be an element of vengeance ; again, the law which is an expression of public sentiment has been violated and requires vindication ; finally, the sinner is guilty and deserves punishment, regardless of its effect on himself or others.

With the advent of the new spirit of humanity and a more rational discrimination of the various classes of evil-doers, however, conceptions of the aim of punishment are undergoing profound change. As a result of this new attitude, the causes of evil-doing are sought in part in constitutional tendencies, in part in conditions to which the individual has been subjected. Besides these factors, an element of freedom is recognized which varies with the person, but which in any case measures the degree of responsibility. The aim of civil punishment, therefore, is to protect society from the evil threatened by the evil-doer : in hopeful cases, by reformatory methods ; in cases regarded as desperate, by isolation or extermination, although the right of society to deprive the criminal of life is denied by many moralists.

We have now to inquire concerning the bearing of these theories on the idea of punishment in a future state; can they be carried over to that world and applied there? It is to be remembered at the outset that theories of divine punishment have always reflected the notions of human punishment which are sanctioned at any given period of history; secondly, that there may be traced an evolution in theories of divine punishment corresponding to the evolution of ideas and practices in civil punishment; thirdly, that our conception of the aim of punishment must be shaped by three notions — of God, of the divine moral government, and of the nature and responsibility of man as a moral being; finally, if we can ascertain what is actually effected by punishment, we shall make no mistake in regarding this result as a part at least of the divine aim with reference to it.

At a time when there were many irrational and unjust human laws, many inhuman judges, many cruel and vindictive penalties, and when executioners stood ready to subject the condemned one to atrocious suffering, we are not surprised to find that conceptions of punishment beyond the grave were vitiated by the same merciless features that marred the notions of civil punishment on earth. This was unavoidable, since the nature both of God and of the world of the lost had been only in part ethicized. The purpose of punishment might be regarded as the expression of the divine anger, the satisfaction of the divine justice, the vindication of the honor of God; in it might be gathered and poured out forever upon the defenseless heads of the non-elect the concentrated fury of Almighty God; and it might be that even "the sight of hell torments

will exalt the happiness of saints forever," which was declared by Edwards to be, according to the Apostle, "one end of the damnation of ungodly men." We must, however, relegate such ideas and modes of expression to those ages in which these were of a piece with the general ideas of men.

With reference to the question, whether one aim of retribution is the giving to the sinner of his just deserts, or a vindication of the divine moral order, the truth is that so long as the moral order endures, all attempts to violate it are foredoomed to failure; and penalty is the revelation of this inevitable futility. The suffering or loss entailed, the consciousness of defeat, only forces home upon the wrong-doer that not in this way can he realize his aim. He may disobey, but he cannot disannul obligation; he may ignore, but he cannot abolish reality. God remains, the will of God abides, the moral order is unchanged; and penalty throws into clear light the essential nullity of sin. This is the true, the eternal vindication of the divine law.

If we bring the question up to the light of our idea of God, of the divine government, of the nature and responsibility of man as personal, we must regard penalty as one, but only one, aspect of moral discipline. This, however, cannot be isolated and thus set off by itself, as if it could take place out of relation to the other aspects of God's dealing with men. Such a notion might seem to be favored by the parables of judgment in the New Testament; for there justice appears to work irrespective of every other quality of God, and only the punitive element of the divine law finds expression. Man is represented as subject of penalty alone. Yet

from such a point of view, we should certainly misinterpret the teaching of these parables. Naturally every parable deals with a single aspect of life and seeks to render the moral meaning of that intelligible. Therefore, for the time being, this must be separated from other relations which in actual experience cannot be separated from it. Thus it becomes more conspicuous, more impressive, but also, taken by itself, more liable to be misunderstood. In God's actual relation to men in his moral government, one never comes upon judgment and punishment alone; on the contrary, invariably and inextricably mingled with these are other forms of divine activity, such as physical blessing and the influences of grace. Nor can we conceive of a world either here or hereafter in which the only relation which God sustains to the soul is that of punishment (cf. Matt. v, 44, 45).

Accordingly, the purpose of punishment after death may be stated somewhat as follows: although taking place there as here, in the nature of things, it is an expression of God's hostility to sin, and a means by which moral evil is prevented either by the reformation of the sinner, or by deterring others from conduct of like spirit.

The question as to the ultimate moral outcome of life in the unseen world is confronted with difficulties of such a nature that a definitive solution is precluded. One of the difficulties referred to arises from the impotence of the imagination in picturing the actual conditions of the other life, and in grasping the full significance of that life as eternal. Of the scenes into which the soul enters at death, we know nothing. If it were true, as our fathers represented, that the impeni-

tent one is immediately plunged into a seething, tossing, restless, devouring ocean of fire, then he could only sink into it in the collapse of utter despair. With the surrender of such pictures, however, we are left without others to take their place. Speculation may busy itself with the realities of that world, and analogies more or less relevant may be carried over from the present as keys to unlock the mysteries of the future ; but when all is done, the veil remains unlifted ; still we do not know. If, then, we are ignorant as to concrete conditions of that existence, we naturally cannot arrive at an authoritative judgment concerning the form in which such punishment or blessedness will be realized, and the effect of either of these upon the character of all who are subject to it.

As to the impotence of the human mind to grasp the idea and the infinite possibilities of an unending future, we must confess in the words of our greatest metaphysician, "We can have but a little sense of what an eternal duration is ; and indeed none can comprehend it ; it swallows up all thought and imagination ; if we set ourselves to think upon it, we are presently lost." ¹

Concerning the destiny of men in the other world, there appear but three conceivable issues — permanent hardening of the evil will, final restoration of all to union with God, or a cessation of consciousness. He who follows these paths to their several ends discovers that each has its own guiding clue, and that all the truth is not found with any one of these to the exclusion of the others. The first derives its interpretative principle from a doctrine of man, the second from a

¹ Edwards, *Works*, vol. vi, p. 451.

doctrine of God, while the third gets its key from a theory of the world.

(1) The doctrine of endless retribution has passed through various stages of development. When one considers the consequences of sin in human character, his attention is drawn away from theology to anthropology — from God to the nature of sin and guilt, to the conscience, to the cumulative aspect of evil choices, and to the history of morals.¹ He sees that sin causes blindness and is self-propagating, and may, therefore, become eternal. He is forced to conclude that character, whether sinful or otherwise, tends to final permanence, which in the nature of the case can be attained but once.²

The law to which reference is here made is the law of habit or "solidarity." We have seen already that the evanescent phases of consciousness are not without effect upon character, even if we are no longer aware of them; but that having dropped below the threshold of consciousness, they take their place as integral elements of that psychological automatism or "second nature" which is the enduring product of all continuous individual activity. In a very real sense, one is the sum of all he has been; he is what he has made himself. Forms of action frequently repeated have an increasing tendency to recur. The scope of spontaneity becomes gradually restricted. The plasticity of earlier processes gives place to more rigid and fixed forms of action. The two great laws universally valid — the tendency to stability, and the irreversibility of processes — find here their supreme in-

¹ Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, vol. ii, pp. 714, 715.

² Cook, *Transcendentalism*, pp. 148-164.

stance.¹ The character of the sinner may in the other life become consolidated, and never again be able to return to its former plasticity. By his own action his destiny is fixed beyond recall. This condition has been reached not purposely indeed, but yet freely in each single act, and when reached is irrevocable. Not that a change is abstractly inconceivable, but from long habit one does not see the truth which would set him free, or seeing any aspect of it, he is conscious of no answering desire; he is only languidly and ineffectually appealed to, and he cannot therefore identify himself with it. In a word, he is lost.

(2) The hope of universal restoration draws its main support from the Christian conception of God.

(a) The universe as the product of the creative activity of God is in every part of it, and at every moment of its existence, opposed to sin. (b) God created man with the capacity of becoming like himself, with aspirations which can never be satisfied so long as this ideal is unrealized. (c) God has toward men a love which is originated by nothing in man, but is the outflowing of the fullness of his own nature; it is, therefore, universal and impartial, unchangeable and eternal. (d) He who creates and loves men has a purpose which can be known in part through the working out of it in the limited scope of the earthly life, and in part, since the earthly life is at best fragmentary and confusing, through an interpretation of it which derives its virtue from a conception of the character of God. (e) The absoluteness of God, — the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, — whose will it is that all men through repentance and forgiveness come

¹ Royce, *The World and the Individual*, Second Series, pp. 219-223.

into union with himself, is the sufficient ground for the "larger hope." In the unfolding of this purpose time is only incidental; in the other world, if not here, the divine wisdom will find a way not only of approach and appeal, but of effective influence to draw every soul within the sweep of redeeming power, and that too without violating the universal conditions of historical development or man's free will to which God submits himself in the carrying out of his aim.

In the light of this ethical absoluteness of God, the idea of the world is in process of being ethicized. The idea of the heavenly world is included in the same development. Already there is a strong reaction against the view that at death by some miraculous act the redeemed soul is to be instantly perfected, and that heaven is a place of formless and monotonous worship of God. There remains yet a further task — the ethicizing of hell.¹ Even if not now, yet later this will be seen to be no less imperative and inevitable than are the other two tasks. In a far deeper and richer sense than the Psalmist was aware, it is true that "If I make my bed in Sheol, behold thou art there." If God is the ideal consciousness, the all-Father, then he cannot in any world be less than our highest ethical thought of him. Nor can his relation to personal beings be other than that which belongs to him as Father. "If we are faithless, he abideth faithful; for he cannot deny himself" (2 Tim. ii, 13).

A universal instead of a partial election, an age-long discipline instead of an ante-mortem probation, a Father whose love embraces all his children instead of

¹ Clarke, *Outline of Christian Theology*, pp. 467, 475.

a Sovereign who out of a mass of indistinguishable and universally corrupt individuals arbitrarily selects those whom he will redeem, a Christian God and a Christian hope instead of a semi-pagan God and a semi-pagan despair, is the seed from which has grown the trust

“that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last to all.”¹

(3) If one considers life from the biological point of view, that function determines structure and ultimately the very organism itself, then he seems forced in the direction of conditional immortality. This biological law has two applications, one referring to the physical, the other to the psychical, series, the outcome of which appears in human life. In the physical series, starting from a mere speck of almost undifferentiated substance as a beginning of organic existence, all of the organs of the human body, their grouping into systems, and their mutual relations, have resulted from slow, well-nigh imperceptible adjustments of lower forms of life to their environment, in which the organisms themselves have undergone progressive modification. The same law has presided over the evolution of the human consciousness; here the process from the first emergence of protoplasmic excitability to the highest degree of rational and spiritual sensitivity in man has been gradual and continuous throughout the whole long history of its development. In this way have come into existence all the forms of bodily organism and all the varieties of mental and moral capacities. Thus we have the general law according to which the human personality has originated.

¹ *In Memoriam.*

In connection with this law there is, however, another condition of profound significance, which in the animal kingdom can be definitely traced and its causes scientifically ascertained — that of degeneration. The organism gradually adapts itself to less complicated relations. In some instances this results in reversion to type, in other instances in permanent loss of organic function, or indeed of the organs themselves possessed by progenitors. It is conceivable that this process of degeneration might go on until not only some of the less necessary, but also the most vital organs, such as those of “sense, the nervous system, and even the mouth and digestive organs, are obliterated — then we shall have pictured a thorough-going instance of Degeneration.”¹ The same law is affirmed of the mental and moral capacities; through disuse these also cease to exist. This would be true of the social organism, but our concern here is with the individual life. Personality is a permanent form of the highest ethical action known to us. It results from the play of the rational will upon the raw materials of sensation and impulse which arise within the sphere of conscious existence. There is indeed, on the one hand, an inherited momentum of psychical energy which impels toward the ideal, in obedience to which self-realization is attained; but, on the other hand, in the degree to which the ideal is refused, the personal life falls short of its completeness. On the physical side, many species of animals, although developed into forms of beauty and enduring for an indefinite period, yet, since they no longer adapted themselves to the necessary conditions of their existence, have totally dis-

¹ Lankester, *Degeneration*, p. 32.

appeared and become extinct; on the spiritual side it is likewise conceivable that for those who persistently reject the ethical and spiritual ideal — “the life of God” — the outcome of the historical process in the world to come will be the complete extinction of all spiritual activities, even the extinction of consciousness itself. Already, in the short span of an earthly existence, there are not wanting evidences that in some individuals this process has begun. Such change must in the nature of the case be extremely slow, perhaps of æonian duration, but if this outcome is possible, the endless future sets no limit to the time within which this moral tragedy, so inexpressibly awful, may come to pass. It may be that only those who have to a certain degree realized the spiritual ideal have gained that stability and momentum of existence which will survive the experience of death, or that some of these, having successfully endured this ordeal, may afterward lose this priceless boon — lent to those only who prove “worthy” of it — and sink back into unconsciousness.

The principle here is that just as in the physical world there is a force constantly tugging at every organism to drag it down to the common level of existence from which in the process of life it was lifted, — which in the case of every physical organism without exception finally becomes victor, — so in the world of individual consciousness the Universal Energy sucks back into undifferentiated form that which by ethical striving had begun to acquire personal life of feeling, thought, and will, but which, refusing or ignoring the ideal, has lost its adaptation to the conditions of its existence, and become a prey to “the Great Leveler.” When this process of absorption is

completed, we have cessation, not indeed of any substantial or permanent reality, but certainly of that particular form of consciousness which had entered the upward path of development. This no longer exists. It has become extinct.

If now attention is directed to either one of these possible outcomes of moral character, the tendency is to minimize or ignore considerations drawn from the other two, or rather to conceive of the matter as if life moved on subject to a single set of influences. The upholder of eternal punishment does indeed affirm the free will of man even to the breaking-point, but at the same time he makes too little of the divine side of life, or of the possibility that the existence of those of whom he speaks, although continued for an indefinite time, yet may not be everlasting. He who stands for universal restoration is apt to overlook the peril to his cause from the operation of free will or the principles involved in the biological law of the failure of life. While he who defends conditional immortality has his gaze so steadily concentrated on his own position that he is perforce blind to the infinite, loving will of God of which man is an expression, and to the essential and possibly inalienable dignity of man as a thought of God. In actual life, however, these principles are not isolated one from the other. In the microcosm of the human consciousness are met in constant and intense activity the three aspects of reality known to us — God, man, the world. But who has been endowed with such foresight that he can infallibly predict the exact and final influence of these factors on every soul in eternity? Whether, ultimately, every one will seek the end of his being through the realization of his

higher self by rising into union with God and with others, or whether any one will obdurately and forever persist in the attempt to realize his lower self by a willful isolation from God and his fellow-men, thus repudiating the ideal element in his being, or, finally, whether in this latter attempt, through failure to adapt himself to the necessary conditions of existence, any one will be absorbed back into that "Infinite and Eternal Energy" whence he had his birth — these are problems which no one not gifted with omniscience can solve. And in those hours when the question of human destiny presses upon us with its haunting and intolerable insistence, we can only voice the age-long cry, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And then with patient confidence abide the unfolding of the eternal plan. Not here below is found the clue to the most ancient and the most painful of the mysteries of man's life, but there —

"Behind the veil, behind the veil."¹

¹ *In Memoriam.*

XI

THE TRINITY

THE discussion of the Trinity is commonly included in that of the doctrine of God. Thus there is presented the unity, the attributes, and finally, the Tri-personality or Tri-unity of God. For this order several causes have conspired together. (1) Historically the doctrine of God was the first of the great Christian doctrines to be formulated by the church in her conflicts with gnosticism and other hostile beliefs. (2) Christian theology has depended upon a theory of the Scriptures which presupposed not only that all the materials for the doctrine of the Trinity were given, but that this doctrine was already contained and explicitly stated therein. (3) Theology has been treated dogmatically, that is, from an *a priori* rather than from an inductive point of view or Christian experience.

In distinction from the traditional method, we have placed this doctrine at the end of our entire discussion, rather than under the general doctrine of God. Summarized, the matter stands thus: even if this doctrine is a philosophical construction of the realities of the Christian faith, yet the realities themselves are given only in Christian experience, and through it rendered intelligible. Just as the full meaning of Christ for rational thought is available only when he has permeated human life with his redemptive power, so a doc-

trine of the Spirit of God is possible only when both individual and social life have been transformed by the benign agency of the Spirit. It was not accidental that the article on the Holy Spirit in the Apostles' Creed appeared after the two concerning God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son, or that it is followed by the declarations concerning the church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection, and the life everlasting. The special meaning originally associated with these clauses may be no longer valid for us. The significance fluctuates, but the Christian life of every age has found in this language a fitting expression of its changing but ever deepening faith. Naturally, in the several stages in which these clauses were added or modified, there was no intention of specifying the attributes of the Spirit; nevertheless, if such intention had existed, it could not have produced a more compendious and yet complete account of those things which belong to "the Dispensation of the Spirit" — the work of the Spirit in its social aspect in the church, in its personal aspect in the renewal of the individual, and in the perfecting of both in the life everlasting.

We now enter upon the constructive presentation of the doctrine of the Trinity. In the process of redemption, God is disclosed as the Father, who in the fullness of time sent his Son, whose work is continued in the power of the divine Spirit. He who is the Source and Ground of all that exists, Author of the purpose of grace, to whose supreme glory the outcome of redemption is to minister, out of whom and unto whom are all things, is the Father. He in whom and through whom this purpose of grace was at length manifested in a personal life, the perfect disclosure

of the Father's will to men, now the risen and living Christ, is the Son. The divine power in which this purpose of grace is in process of realization, which is present especially in the human consciousness as the principle of its experience as Christian, is the Holy Spirit. Such a description of the life of God in relation to the world corresponds both to the consciousness and words of Christ and to Christian experience.

This is the historical or economical Trinity, and one may hold to it without attempt at further explanation. For such a position several good reasons may be alleged; and one must not be blamed who does not see his way clear to investigate the subject more fully, or commit himself to the speculations of the schools. One might be confirmed in this position by reference to the history of the church. For several generations after the founding of the church, when, fired by an unquenchable enthusiasm, she won the most splendid triumphs that have been gained in any period of like extent in her history, there was no developed doctrine of the Trinity. The Old Roman Creed, in existence about 160 A.D., which is found substantially in the later Apostles' Creed, discloses the beliefs which the church of the West deemed most necessary for the church to hold and to preach. Yet the church felt the necessity of coming to an understanding with Greek philosophy, in which contact, if she later enlisted that philosophy in her service, that philosophy provided not only the tongue but also the form and not a little of the content of the chief doctrinal formula of the faith. But no one will maintain that with the doctrine of the Trinity thus elaborated the church was any more

successful in her divine ministry than she had been in Apostolic times.

It may be further claimed that the historical Trinity contains all the elements which are essential to Christian experience. Here are found those great religious realities which can be brought into vital relations with faith, and which alone create faith. One becomes a Christian not because he accepts some metaphysical notions concerning God, but because he responds to the love which God has revealed in his Son, in a life like that of Christ, inspired by the Spirit of God. In proof of this we have only to refer to Paul or John. Paul argues that faith is in nowise dependent upon a particular philosophy of religion. He himself consciously disregarded the Jewish philosophy in which his scholastic training had consisted. He felt too that his message was in no way weakened by the absence from it of the rhetorical refinements or the cosmological speculations which the Greeks deemed essential to the presentation of religion. Although the author of John's Gospel opens his treatise with a prologue, the key to which is found only in the philosophy of his day, whether Hebrew or Greek, and it would seem that without an understanding of this the Gospel itself would be unintelligible, yet he has no sooner ended his prologue than he enters upon his wonderful story, in the entire recounting of which he seems to be oblivious of the fact that he had introduced his readers to one of the profoundest speculative ideas of his or indeed of any age. And we may go further, and declare that the religious experience of these men, never surpassed by any who have come after them, was dependent not upon the doctrine of an immanent

Trinity, — no such doctrine was in existence until long after their death, — but upon believing in the presence and power of the life-giving Spirit of God, who was carrying forward among men the gracious ministry of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

This position must not be understood as an argument for the reduction of Christian belief to its lowest terms. It is only claimed that Christian experience in the present century requires nothing for its completion which was not already in the first century the creative power of the same experience. The constituents of the doctrine of an ontological Trinity are indeed given in the historical Trinity, but they do not appear upon the surface; they can be perceived and understood only by those who have had a certain degree of metaphysical discipline; and even now, as in the early church, men of equal philosophical training and of equal devotion to the living Christ as the Saviour of men will inevitably interpret the realities of faith from different points of view, and express their convictions in different phrasings. But as of old, men are saved by the fact, not by the philosophy of the fact, that God's gracious will was revealed in Jesus Christ, and made real by the influence of the Spirit of God.

One may, moreover, rest in the historical Trinity, on the ground that outside of the Christian revelation it is unintelligible. The New Testament Trinity is concerned wholly with redemption. Because of sin, the Son of God is sent, the Holy Spirit given. Indeed, the New Testament knows nothing of a Trinity apart from redemption; if, therefore, one's interest is purely religious, if, that is, the meaning of God is wholly

wrapped up in what it stands for in relation to God as Father, as Redeemer, as Sanctifier, then one may be more or less indifferent to inquiries which intrude into the hidden depths of the Divine Being for the sake of reaching an immanent Trinity.

Again, one may hold to a theory of knowledge which, precluding investigation into the inner nature of God, restricts the doctrine of the Trinity to that of revelation. According to such a theory, there are two kinds of judgments, one theoretic, that is, purely scientific, concerned with objective reality within the sphere of related causes, the other, judgments of value, which express the worth of reality as it affects the esthetic or religious consciousness. This distinction, which almost from the beginning of speculative philosophy divides the great schools of thought, in our day goes back to Kant for its critical justification, and finds in the school of Ritschl its warmest advocates. It is true that those who follow Ritschl offer widely different interpretations of this position, but he himself has no discussion of an immanent Trinity in his published works. According to him, Fatherhood is the revelation of God to his Son, and through his Son to the community. The Son is the one in whom God's will of love is perfectly expressed. The Spirit of God is God's knowledge of himself, and the principle of the distinctly ethical and religious life of the Christian community. Kaftan indeed knows of a Trinity, an eternal threefold mode of the being of God, which is demanded by the facts of the Christian revelation and experience. His theory of knowledge will not, however, suffer him to inquire further into the essential nature of this eternal reality. In both of these cases,

therefore, the doctrine of the Trinity, since it is the product of faith, is likewise available for faith. If the aid of cosmological speculations is declined, this is solely because of a conviction that these speculations are at best only a crutch that will break under the weight imposed.

Once more, one may be deterred from formulating a doctrine of an ontological Trinity by reason of the practical difficulties involved. We have only to recall the many attempts of this sort, together with the unsatisfactory nature of the results of the same, in order to have begotten in us a spirit of hesitation and even of despair, that anything better will crown our endeavors than has fallen to the lot of others. This feeling lends force to two considerations drawn from opposite points of view. On the one hand, it is held that "here we stand in the presence of the mystery of all mysteries." "It is a truth which lies beyond the domain of human language, beyond the scope of sense, beyond the comprehension of reason. The archangels know it not, the angels understand it not, the Son himself has not made it fully known."¹ On the other hand, in the Athanasian Creed,—the highest expression of the human rational faculty,—the metaphysical and even the mathematical relations of the "one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity," are explored and defined. To which is added, "He, therefore, who will be saved must thus think of the Trinity." Yet, however firmly men have cherished the belief that the Saviour of men was the Son of God, and that his redemptive work is continued by the Holy Spirit, still the dilemma embodied in this creed obstinately forces itself upon

¹ Hilary of Poitiers.

the attention — either the unity of God is shattered in the Trinity, or else the Trinity is absorbed in the unity. From the traditional standpoint, only one of the two positions referred to can be maintained; either “for our reason the unity of the Trinity is a mystery,”¹ in which case any attempt at rational explanation is foredoomed to failure, — it remains an object of unreflecting faith; or it is susceptible of rational apprehension with only such reserves of mystery as belong to all reality. But in both instances alike, the practical difficulties may appear so great that instead of wandering and losing one’s way in the mazes of a perfect mystery, or of trying to bring to rational and coherent statement the truth of the Divine Being, one may rather be content with the simple Trinity of redemption — the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.

For such an attitude many distinguished names may be cited. Melanchthon, in the first edition of his *Loci*, passed by the church doctrine of the Trinity on the ground that this mystery was more properly adored than made a subject of rational investigation.² Calvin, in the early editions of his *Institutes*, entered so little into the discussion of this subject that he had to answer to the charge of leaning to Arianism. Count Zinzendorf, who would substitute a theology of the heart for that of the head, in his *Catechism* for those who had been only recently converted, would have them pointed to Christ as their Saviour, to their heavenly Father, — the Father of Jesus Christ, — and to the Spirit who trains them for the kingdom of heaven. Schleiermacher will have no doctrine of the

¹ Miley, *Systematic Theology*, vol. i, p. 225.

² Cf. Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, Book II, § 2.

Trinity which is to rest on speculative or *a priori* grounds instead of on the essential basis of Christian experience; but this, according to him, is an economical not an immanent Trinity.¹

In view of the foregoing considerations, one would not be reasonably censured who, holding fast the Trinity of the New Testament, yet does not feel inclined to push on into the difficulties which beset the doctrine of an ontological Trinity. Reasons are not wanting, however, which encourage one to a still further penetration into the heart of this mystery, and to a statement in simple terms of what is there found. It could not be a complete mystery, else it would be as impossible to faith as to knowledge. Besides, as rational beings, we can recognize no mandate which declares, "Thus far and no farther!" For every fact there is a principle, for every *credo*, a *rationale*. "There can be no incomprehensibility in the doctrine of the Trinity, if our view of the nature of thought be true, the view, namely, that the difficulties with which thought has to cope are difficulties of its own creation, which it must therefore be adequate to deal with."² Moreover, that there is a haunting problem here in the facts of our faith is evident in the history of this doctrine in the church. To the solution of it has been brought the prolonged and tireless devotion of the profoundest scholars of the Christian era. Origen, Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, Calvin, Edwards, are only the greater names of those who have sought to inquire into the meaning of the Trinity.

¹ Cf. also Bushnell, *Building Eras*, "The Christian Trinity, a Practical Truth," p. 122.

² Haldane, *The Pathway to Reality*, vol. ii, p. 161.

However profound and subtle their speculation, with whatever aid of philosophy they meditated on this surpassing theme, it was never with any of them a question of theoretic interest; on the contrary, they believed that here was the very citadel of the Christian faith, and that with it stood or fell the redemption that was in Christ.

In addition, there is, in the New Testament, as we have seen, teaching which invites to a further inquiry as to the ultimate meaning of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit with reference to the being of God. The Logos, the self-revealing principle of God, "became flesh," that is, Jesus Christ. Other titles are indeed given, and other particular properties are ascribed to the earthly Christ and the risen Lord; but these belong for the most part to that circle of thought presented in the term, Logos. It is immaterial whether to the Logos-doctrine which characterizes the Prologue of the Gospel of John we attribute a Hebrew or a Greek origin. The word may be a translation of the Palestinian "memra" — Logos or Word;¹ or it may represent a commingling of the Platonic-Stoic philosophy, either as the "archetypal idea" or form according to which the world was created,² or as the rational principle which pervades and gives intelligibility to the world. In any case, the term shows that the Hebrew no less than the Greek had reached a stage of development where he recognized in history a principle which could be identified with neither history nor the world, but of which these were in some sense an expression. This Reason, or Word, or Wis-

¹ Westcott, *Commentary on John*, Introduction.

² Philo, *Leg. Alleg.*, III, 31.

dom, manifest in all things and everywhere, is perfectly interpreted only in relation to God.

With reference to the Spirit of God, if this Spirit is the principle of the divine self-consciousness, it is also the principle of the divine self-communication. Thus the Holy Spirit is presented from two points of view: first, as the active cause of exceptional and temporary gifts, such as that of seeing visions, prophesying, and speaking with tongues; secondly, as the abiding presence of God, the permanent principle of the new life. What is here referred to is not merely something intermediate between God and man, which he has detached from himself, nor is it a part of the creation; it is not simply a divine influence, which has its analogy in human influence, which continues the power of a noble deed or of a great life in ever widening circles of imitative thought and activity. And there are not three Spirits. On the contrary, although the reference is here to the Spirit of God, there to the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit in the heart of the Christian is the same Spirit which abode permanently — “rested” — in Jesus Christ. In the presence of the Spirit, God is present, and Christ is present. From the idea of the Spirit, therefore, we are led to see in God the self-communicating, as well as from the idea of the Logos in Christ the self-revealing, principle of the divine nature.

Three further considerations must not be overlooked. (1) The divine unity. God is one. This is a fundamental reality. It is the glory of the Scriptures that they trace the steps of that historical process through which the religious consciousness of the Hebrew people, although originally polytheistic, passed

from the practical worship of one God to an ethical, theoretical monotheism. On this great attainment of the human spirit rests the whole of man's conscious relation to God. (2) The philosophy of religion knows of only one infinite and eternal Being, through whose manifold revelation in the human consciousness is awakened the feeling of dependence and of obligation. (3) Christian experience brings the soul face to face with one God, and renews itself in constant communion and service to him. Tritheism is polytheism; it has never been the conscious belief of Christian theologians. Definitions which have come perilously near to Tritheism have always returned to the triumphant assertion of one being or nature of God. The doctrine of unity must be held to be radical, constructive, and all-determining. "The Lord our God, the Lord is one."

In any attempt to formulate a doctrine of the Trinity, it is to be remembered that we know, we can know, nothing of the nature of God apart from his self-revelation. We can make no assertion, therefore, concerning a Trinity which does not rest on revelation. The doctrine of the Trinity is an attempt to carry back into the depths of the divine nature those manifestations of God which have appeared in redemptive revelation, and to affirm of them eternal reality. It is not assumed, however, that God can be known as he is in the depths of his being apart from his self-disclosure. What qualities and fullness of powers are true of him in this respect, we do not know, and speculation is only an unwarranted guess.¹ A formulation of the doctrine of an ontological Trinity in

¹ Cf., however, Samuel Hopkins, *Works*, vol. i, p. 66.

which God was severed from all relation to the world would be not only a fruitless but also an impossible task; of an isolated and unrelated Trinity no knowledge is possible. But this consideration must not be so interpreted as to forbid our giving to the qualities of God which appear in the temporal life of man an eternal and unbounded significance. This is the meaning of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. It is the interpretation of human experience in terms of eternal reality.

Finally, avoidance of the term, "Person," with reference to the Trinity is suggested in the interest both of clear thinking and of the religious life. One has, indeed, the right to employ the word in this connection; he may plead the long usage of the term, and provided he is careful to announce the meaning he assigns to the word, he may not be forbidden to use it in that way. But on the other hand, the word in this connection is purely technical. The fact that it is technical and theological, rather than Scriptural, is not decisive against it; nevertheless, the fact that it is technical is not to be ignored or forgotten. Moreover, the use of the term, "Person," is needlessly confusing. However "convenient" the term may be,¹ yet it is applied to God in a different sense than when it is attributed to men, and indeed, in a sense so different that it would seem to require another term to express it. Augustine declares that the word was used not because it was felt to be exact, but in order not to be silent when something, however obscure, was to be affirmed. Still further, those who have thus used this term in respect to the Trinity have often and

¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, I, Quæst. 29, § 3.

naturally conveyed the impression that the analogy suggested by it could be carried over to the divine nature and made valid in reasoning and inference concerning an immanent Trinity. It is, for instance, held that "each of the Persons of the Trinity must be supposed by us to have a self-consciousness: this is the least that can be said, maintaining anything like discrimination."¹ But in such an expression it is evident that the analogy from human personality is misleading; it has been overworked. Again, the term, "Person," even when put forth with the utmost caution, tends to overflow the meaning assigned to it; no sooner does the word appear than the user of it begins insensibly to be betrayed into notions and forms of speech which are, to say the least, on the border-land of Tritheism. Finally, since the doctrine of the Trinity is a theological construction, and the word "Person" associated with it belongs to "the category of the schools,"² "it would be safer to disuse the term,"³ and to seek some other expression which is not subject to a like disadvantage. Several terms of this character are at hand. There is, for instance, "hypostasis," or if one objects to the Greek form of the word, its Latin equivalent, "subsistence." For more than fifteen hundred years these terms have safeguarded the interests of faith committed to them. But one need not be confined to these expressions. Equally suited to the purpose are "principle," and "potency."

We are now ready to state what we mean by the

¹ Henry B. Smith, *System of Christian Theology*, p. 80; cf. Stearns, *Present Day Theology*, pp. 196, 197.

² Fairbairn, *Place of Christ*, etc., p. 400.

³ Fairchild, *Elements of Theology*, p. 205.

Trinity. The statement will run somewhat as follows : As we conceive of God in his relation to the world, and especially to men, we present him to ourselves in three, and only three, ways. First, as the Ground out of which have sprung his manifold self-expressions, revealing himself in all and yet enduring back of all, the infinite Source, the Principle of origination. When, however, we conceive of the divine self-expression, we come upon two distinct and permanent principles : a perpetual streaming forth of the divine life from this eternal Fountain into forms of visibility or into modes of conscious life, giving expression under finite aspects to the inexhaustible content of the divine consciousness — the self-revealing Principle of God ; and that the universe thus brought into being may in no part of it be severed and so set off from the source of its existence, but may partake of the constant fullness of the divine life, God gives himself in a reciprocal way to his word, to every living thing, and most of all to men, — and we have the self-communicating Principle of God. Accordingly, in an analysis of our conception of God, we reach three ultimate and enduring Principles — the Principle of source, the Principle of self-revelation, and the Principle of self-communication. “There are three ; there can be but three ; and all that we can conceive of the Infinite mind may be reduced to these three : infinite LIFE, LIGHT, LOVE.”¹ “Out of him, and through him, and unto him, are all things.”

In this statement are several affirmations. (1) The

¹ Chevalier Ramsay, *The Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion*, 1747. Copied by Edwards, and cited in Allen's *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 351.

existence of three distinct hypostases or principles in the being of God. These distinctions, although interpreted by us and therefore become intelligible through the relation of God to the world, are, indeed, products of thought, but they are not simply modes of human apprehension; they are eternally real in God. Their supreme manifestation is in redemption, but they are no less real with reference to the creation. If we turn our attention to the terms that are used to express these distinctions, by "hypostasis" is meant a permanent, substantial reality which is the abiding ground to which phenomena are to be referred as their cause; by "principle" is understood that ultimate reality in which is found the explanation of Christian experience and of the world as we know it; by "potency" is signified the enduring reality in which the world of experience originates — a mighty energy, active, efficient, eternally realizing rational ends. Those who employ the term, "Person," and confine themselves to the limits of their definition of the word, mean no more than what is expressed in the language just referred to.¹

(2) These hypostases are distinct, yet they are not independent, self-existent realities in the Godhead. There is no Logos apart from God, and "there was never a time when God was not Logos."² Nor is there any principle of divine self-communion separate from the infinite Source of all, or existing in isolation from his self-revelation in the world. Accord-

¹ The church doctrine of the Trinity affirms that there are, in the Godhead, three distinct hypostases or substances, . . . each possessing one and the same nature, though in a different manner." Smyth, *Observations*, etc., "Introduction," p. 14.

² John of Damascus, *Expos. of Orthodox Faith*, Book I, chap. vii.

ingly, the ancient Symbol rightly affirms: "Not three Gods: but one God." Substituting the personal terms of the Athanasian Creed in place of those preferred by us, we shall say: "The Father is made of none: neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone: not made, nor created: but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son: neither made, nor created, nor begotten: but proceeding."¹

(3) From this point of view, we see the force of the subtle affirmation that as the distinctions are eternal, and are not separate realities in the Godhead, so they are incommunicable in relation to one another. The Ground and Source of all never ceases to be the Principle of origination; the self-revealing Principle cannot become the infinite Cause, or, giving up its distinctive nature, be transformed into a Principle of self-communication. Although each of these hypostases is what it is partly because of its relation to the others, — the Logos to the ultimate Ground of being, and the Spirit to both of these, — yet each is self-identical, with its own distinctive and inalienable properties.

(4) The whole of God is in each of these hypostases or potencies. One is no more and no less divine than are the others. In the action of one nothing of God is abstracted from the other principles. The whole of God is in the permanent unity of the infinite self-consciousness. The whole of God, that is, his essential nature, is revealed in every expression of his creative energy. The whole of God, that is, his love, is given to every part of the universe, and is evident

¹ *Athanasian Creed*, 21-23.

in its supreme manifestation in man in redemption. If one could perfectly fathom any one of these hypostases, he would in that one find the nature of the other two perfectly disclosed.

(5) In this presentation, the essence of that which "Person" stood for in the Athanasian Creed is conserved, since as far as God is personal, the personal nature of God appears in each hypostasis. God is "not only one Essence, but also one person."¹

(6) Finally, the terms, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as applied to the immanent Trinity, with the qualifications indicated above, may be substituted for the unpersonal words, "hypostasis," "principle," "potency." One may not, indeed, claim for these terms explicit Biblical usage, except with reference to the historical Trinity, but, as has been several times intimated, it is permissible for us to transfer into the highest categories known to us the supreme realities of our religious experience. The cogency of these terms is due to the fact that they are derived from the consciousness of the divine life in man. And there is a peculiar fitness in their use. For Fatherhood stands for origination, Sonship for derivation or expression of Fatherhood, the Spirit for that expression of both Fatherhood and Sonship where these become a vital reality in the personal life of man.² Any terms are at best only

¹ "From this point of view, the Trinitarian distinctions, in themselves regarded, are not three persons in the modern sense of this word, though each is in the highest and fullest sense personal, as possessing the one divine nature, and in and through the other hypostases. This, however, is no new doctrine, but rather the legitimate development of what has been held from the beginning, an adjustment of its statement to the clearer conceptions which have been gained of personality." Smyth, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

² Cf. Whiton, *Gloria Patri*.

symbols, and can do no more than catch and hold some aspect of this deep reality of God. That they are precise scientific descriptions of the ultimate truth of the Divine Being is not to be affirmed either from the Scriptures or from Christian experience. The Trinity of the Scriptures and of experience is a Trinity of the self-revelation of God — the Father whose Son, Jesus Christ, discloses the infinite purpose of grace, whose Spirit energizes in the life of men for the realization of that eternal good-will.

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